Part 1: Introduction

The body of work presented for examination here was published between June 2008 and February 2018 and incorporates peer-reviewed journal articles and book chapters. Those ten outputs are numbered, named, and listed in Part 1.2: hereafter the term 'body of work' is used to refer to the outputs as a whole.

Individual outputs centre on community development, community arts, social movement, and youth work praxis[1] in contemporary Ireland. These diverse fields of praxis reflect comparable efforts by people to make sense of, highlight and address their interests through involvement in *collective action*. They invoke shared discourses of 'equality', 'participation' and 'empowerment', even though their forms of organisation, tactics and strategic approaches may diverge significantly. Taken together these fields of praxis, and the many volunteers, activists, professionals, and other participants engaged in them, constitute a vital part of a variegated and differentiated Irish civil society.

Youth work, community development, community arts and social movement organisations can, and often do, appeal to distinct activist, intellectual or practice traditions. Despite their proximate bases in communities, they may appear to be estranged from or in competition with each other, while also exhibiting varying degrees of professionalisation, institutionalisation or popular participation. *Acknowledging their specificity, this body of work situates community development, community arts, youth work and social movement organisations together within the contested terrain of collective action.* Across the outputs collective action is theorised as: the site of and target for complex and dynamic power relationships; imbricated with various governmental projects through which multiple societal actors seek to mobilise citizens; a potential site of and resource for resistance to particular expressions of government, ideology, and power; and as developing alternative social relationships, organisational forms, and modes of communication. Therefore, the body of work acknowledges and analyses how the meanings, forms and purposes of collective action are constantly reworked, just as they give expression to important societal struggles.

The normative, identity, interest and knowledge claims expressed by civil society actors are, at least partly, constructed in, through and against their encounters with the state. From the 1970s, community development became a technique in the Irish state's anti-poverty repertoire, and successive Governments initiated policy programmes that helped establish

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[1] 'Praxis' refers to a critical, reflexive, symbiotic and ongoing dialogue between ideas and social action or theory and practice (Section 3.1: Covering Document).

community development and arts projects in 'disadvantaged areas'. In the 1990s, the Irish state began to develop a more interventionist approach to the funding and recognition of youth work. Furthermore, civil society actors seek to influence, and in certain instances participate in, the functioning of the state, with strategies that range from partnership to service delivery to advocacy to outright resistance. Consequently, rather than representing civil society and the state as locked in a binary, deterministic and asymmetrical power relationship, this research also analyses the extent to which they are co-constitutive and overlapping realms.

1.1: Research Questions and Structure of Covering Document

The body of work references policy and practice developments that span the period 2004 to 2017. Some outputs are explicitly discursive and theoretical in orientation, raising foundational questions about the politics of civil society that might resonate with readers across time and place. Others look more closely at the nuances of the Irish cultural and political scene, and how they mediate or are mediated by collective action. For example, the implementation and rationalisation of austerity following Ireland's economic collapse in 2008, is identified as a particularly salient influence over the shape and form of state/civil society relationships in the period.

Taken together, the outputs are concerned with addressing three broad sets of inter-related questions.

Firstly, how is collective action rationalised and (de)legitimised? The research analyses how community development, community arts, youth work and social movements are discursively constructed in contemporary Ireland. What kinds of actors are involved in constructing these fields of praxis and for what ends? What forms of collective action are imagined, foreclosed, elicited, or demonised through these discursive constructions? What knowledge claims, 'expertise', evidence-bases and value commitments are mobilised in the various discourses of collective action? To what extent are these discourses changing and how?

Secondly, what is the role of the state in governing civil society? Understood as a contested, mobile, and often contradictory actor, the neoliberal state is implicated in the creation of the political-economic contexts giving rise to collective action, whilst also potentially hindering or supporting collective action's democratic reach. The research asks, how has the Irish state, through its funding regimes and shifting policy priorities, sought to influence the discourses, practices and structures of collective action? How has austerity, as a discourse and practice, informed the state's engagement with civil society actors in Ireland?

What (new) rationalities and technologies of government are being deployed through civil society?

Thirdly, what is the scope for resistance and alternative forms of relationships? The outputs consider the extent to which state funded community development, community arts and youth work projects are tasked with responsibilising or managing those who are considered 'unruly' and 'unproductive' citizens. They analyse if and how projects and their workers are subjected to increasingly intrusive forms of performance measurement as they pursue their objectives. The body of work is critical in that it recognises that the discourses and practices of collective action can be invoked to support narrow conceptions of human freedom, agency, or possibility. Conversely, the research tracks the potential for resistance and critique within civil society, asking can the discourses, concepts and practices of collective action be reclaimed and re-signified for different purposes. What tactics of protest or refusal are practised by actors and movements within civil society? What is the scope for dialogue and interchange across different fields of praxis, between social movements and community development or between community development and community arts, for example? (How) can we think and talk about emancipatory praxis? What alternative sources of inspiration and imagination might inform collective action?

The distinctiveness and originality of this body of work lies in its parallel analyses of, and its efforts to encourage dialogue between, community development, community arts, youth work and social movement praxis. It deploys theory and concepts from sociology, social policy, cultural and media studies, making it strongly interdisciplinary in orientation. The body of work also validates the role of cultural production and practices –novels, poetry, or visual arts– in supporting critical re-conceptualisations of collective action, power, identity, and resistance. Another original innovation is the adoption –in four outputs- of a Foucauldian governmentality approach to analysing the civil society/state nexus in Ireland, where liberal, critical-pluralist, neo-Marxist or neo-Gramscian approaches are more commonly utilised by social scientists. Hence, a distinctive feature of the outputs is their interrogation of if and how collective action *is both constituted by* and *constitutive of* practices of *government* in contemporary Ireland. However, the research's interest in finding resistant and emancipatory discourses and forms of action, distinguishes it from many Foucauldian studies, which tend to regard such normative projections as government by another name. Accordingly, the research suggests that collective action can and should express normative commitments, while appreciating its contingency in mediating and being mediated by complex power dynamics and forms of government. In so doing, outputs interrogate Ireland's distinctive processes and

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practices of neoliberalisation, the changing policy priorities of the state, and the ambiguous internal and outer boundaries of civil society itself.

Part 2 of this Covering Document, outlines and clarifies core terms or concepts that are deployed across the various outputs.   Part 3 details the theory, methodology and methods that have underpinned the research, with some reflections on the body of work as a contribution to and as informed by my own praxis within civil society.   Part 4 situates the body of work within the political, economic, and cultural context of 21st Century Ireland, with particular reflection on the significance of the recent regime of austerity, and its treatment within the outputs. This sets the scene for and anticipates points of discussion that are explored further in Part 5. Presenting an integrated thematic overview of the ten outputs, it seeks to demonstrate their coherence, originality, and relevance for a critical analysis of the complex power dynamics shaping collective action in, and perhaps beyond, Ireland today.

1.2: The Body of Work

Below are listed ten outputs that constitute the body of work; numbered chronologically and dating from the oldest to the most recently published.

Output #1: Meade, Rosie (2008) 'Mayday, Mayday! Newspaper framing anti-globalisers! A critical analysis of the Irish Independent's anticipatory coverage of the "Day of the Welcomes" demonstrations', *Journalism*, 9(3):330-352. [8,703 words approximately]

Output #2: Meade, Rosie (2009) 'Community development: a critical analysis of its "keywords" and values', in Catherine Forde, Elizabeth Kiely and Rosie Meade (eds) *Youth and Community Work in Ireland: Critical Perspectives,* Dublin: Blackhall Publishing, pp.57-80. [9,374 words approximately/excluding references]

Output #3: Meade, Rosie (2010) 'Robert Tressell's *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists'*, in Fiona Dukelow and Órla O'Donovan (eds) *Mobilising Classics, Reading Radical Writing in Ireland,* Manchester: Manchester University Press, pp.54-71. [8,179 words /excluding references]

Output #4: Meade, Rosie and Shaw, Mae (2011) 'Community development and the arts: sustaining the democratic imagination in lean and mean times', *Journal of Arts and Communities*, 2(1):65-80. [7,640 words approximately]

Output #5: Meade, Rosie (2012) 'Government and community development in Ireland: the contested subjects of professionalism and expertise', *Antipode*, 44(3):889-910.
[10,617 words approximately]

Output #6: Meade, Rosie (2015) 'Worlds turned upside down? The Older People's Uprising, 2008' in Rosie Meade and Fiona Dukelow (eds) *Defining Events: Power, Resistance and Identity in 21st Century Ireland*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, pp.161-180. [8,279 words approximately]

Output #7: Meade, Rosie (2017) 'The re-signification of state-funded community development in Ireland: a problem of austerity and neoliberal government', *Critical Social Policy:* Advance Access:1-22:
http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0261018317701611   [8,346   words approximately]

Output #8: McCrea, Niamh, Meade, Rosie and Shaw, Mae (2017) 'Solidarity, organizing and tactics of resistance in the 21st Century: social movements and community development praxis in dialogue', *Community Development Journal*, 52(3):385-404. [7,308 words approximately]

Output # 9: Meade, Rosie (2018) 'Community arts, community development and the "impossibility" and "necessity" of cultural democracy', in Sue Kenny, Brian McGrath and Rhonda Phillips (eds) *The Routledge Handbook of Community Development*: *Perspectives from Around the Globe*, New York: Routledge, pp.210-226. [10,004 words approximately]

Output # 10: Kiely, Elizabeth and Meade, Rosie (2018) 'Contemporary Irish youth work policy and practice: a governmental analysis', *Child & Youth Services*, advance access:1-26:
https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/0145935X.2018.1426453   [12,435   words approximately]

Part 2: Core Terms and Concepts

Part 2 flags and delimits core terms and concepts that recur across the body of work. It is written in full recognition of the substantive and unresolved debates surrounding that terminology: therefore, it should be regarded as a necessarily brief and partial rendering of some of the most salient themes as they directly relate to the various outputs.

2.1: The State and Civil Society Nexus

Across the body of work 'the state' is referenced repeatedly and it is important to explain how that term is conceptualised and deployed within the outputs. In most instances (Outputs, #1, #2, #5, #6, #7, #9, #10) research is focused on developments within the demarcated territory of the Republic of Ireland, hereafter, referred to as Ireland[2]. The term 'the state' is used as a shorthand for the 'apparatus of government in its broadest sense, for those institutions that are recognizably "public"' in that they are responsible for the collective organization of communal life and are funded at the public's expense' (Heywood, 2015:68). Therefore, the internally differentiated character of the state, in that it includes representative, administrative, legislative, and judicial branches, is acknowledged. As a concept 'the state' embraces the Government[3], in its local and national formations, along with a range of agencies that are responsible for administering and managing economic, social, and cultural policy.

In his lecture *Politics as Vocation* Max Weber (1918:n.p., original emphasis), memorably referred to the state as 'a human community that (successfully) claims the *monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force* within a given territory', and 'politics' as referring to the 'striving to share power or striving to influence the distribution of power, either among states or among groups within a state'. He thus evoked the potential for state rule and authority to be experienced as coercive, and for the scope and form of state power to be disputed. In this body of work the disputed character of state power is considered with respect to the actions of diverse movements and community-based organisations that have emerged to advocate before, partner, resist, appease, advise, or rebuke the state. This engagement, along

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[2] Parallel developments in Northern Ireland are not addressed in the outputs or Covering Document. The use of 'Ireland' to refer to what is in effect the Republic of Ireland is done purely for convenience and to avoid cumbersome expression.

[3] Generally, when 'Government' is written with a capital 'G' in this Covering Document it refers to 'the Government'. When 'government' is used with a small 'g' it refers to 'government' as the 'act of governing', an activity that can be undertaken by multiple societal actors.

with changing political-economic and ideological currents, contributes to the reshaping of expectations of what can and ought to be practically accomplished by any given state. Consequently, this means that 'states and the interstate system provide a moving target because of their complex developmental logics and because there are continuing efforts to transform them' (Jessop, 2008:111).

The body of work is alive to the contemporary significance of the discourses and practices of neoliberalisation in reconstituting the functioning and character of the state internationally (Outputs #4, #8) and in Ireland (Outputs, #1, #2, #5, #6, #7, #9, #10). While it is common to associate neoliberalism with the withering away of the state or its displacement by market actors, the body of work acknowledges that, rather than being abandoned, the 'state' is reformed, redefined, and re-responsibilised both in light of and to effect neoliberalisation. Jamie Peck et al. (2017:2-3) distinguish 'actually existing neoliberalisms' from what are often generalising, reifying, and universalising accounts of neoliberalism as a self-propelling agent of free market dogma, contending that,

> …its 'actually existing' manifestations are—and can only be— partial, polycentric, and plural; its dynamics of frontal advance and flawed reproduction are marked by friction, contradiction, polymorphism, and uneven geographical development, and not just because the project-cum-process has been somehow 'blocked' or half-cocked—that it remains incomplete—but because volatile hybridity is the condition of existence.

In Ireland, as this body of work illustrates (Outputs #1, #2, #5, #6, #7, #10), since the 1990s and up to the present-day, processes of neoliberalisation have variously accommodated and been accompanied by what might seem contradictory state practices: social partnership, the socialisation of private bank debt, the expansion and later retrenchment of funding for NGOs, and the introduction of new forms of efficiency and effectiveness management to discipline publicly subsided activities (Part 4: Covering Document). Discourses and practices of neoliberalisation are articulated with the distinctive political, economic, and cultural currents that circulate within given territories (Outputs #1, #2, #5, #6, #7, #9), while still tending to validate 'privatisation' over public provision, 'financialisation, attacks on the welfare state, monetarism, and the weakening of labour' (Mercille, 2017:2). States simultaneously act and are acted upon as neoliberalism becomes practicable. Of concern in the body of work, is how the Irish state and civil society have overlapped, interacted and how their relationships have been reconstituted in the context of the deepening neoliberalisation that followed 2008's economic collapse (Outputs #2, #5, #6, #7, #9, #10).

'Civil Society', notes Lesley Hodgson (2004), has achieved a similar ubiquity, popular appeal, and emotional purchase to that of the concept 'community'. During the 19th Century, influenced by the writings of Hegel, a distinctly 'modern' concept of civil society gained traction, alluding to a 'third dimension' of social relations, distinguishable from yet 'standing between the family and state' (Neocleous, 1995:396). More recently, Michael Walzer (1990:1) positions civil society as 'the space of uncoerced human association and also the set of relational networks -formed for the sake of family, faith, interest, and ideology -that fill this space': civil society is thus defined as an arena of comparative freedom from, for example, the authority of the state, and as giving expression to multiple forms of human association and collective endeavour. Following the demise of the communist regimes in Eastern Europe, the progressive role of civil society as an expression of democracy and human rights became a recurring motif in academic and political discourse. For example, in its White Paper on voluntary activity, the Irish Government, validated the vital contribution of civil society 'to solving social and economic progress [sic]' (Government of Ireland, 2000:16).

Against such optimistic claims, Gramscian inspired analyses critically interrogate the ways through which civil society actors and institutions variously reinforce, reproduce, or resist the structures, ideologies, economic and power relations of late capitalism. Antonio Gramsci (1971) proposes that within capitalism, the domination of subordinate groups is partly achieved through the coercive power of the state, which is given effect through, for example, legal, policing, and military institutions. Crucially though, the continuity of capitalism, and associated systems of rule, also depends upon 'popular consent' which is 'gained through the political, moral and intellectual leadership within civil society' (Popple, 2015:75). Civil society institutions –such as trade unions, education, or community groups -may transmit and boost conformity to dominant ideologies but they may also counter or mount progressive challenges to those ideologies. Gramsci (1971:235) observes that the 'superstructures of civil society are like the trench-systems of modern warfare' and, continuing the militaristic symbolism, he highlights the importance of a 'war of position', that is centred on civil society rather than the state, and that seeks to alter people's world views and forms of action. Critical, Gramscian-inspired scholars thus read civil society dialectically as 'simultaneously the arena in which capitalist hegemony is secured but also where the subaltern classes forge social alliances and articulate alternative hegemonic projects' (Munck, 2006:330). They identify civil society as a 'key site of struggle' (Mayo, 2005:46; Swyngedouw, 2005:1996) in the dual sense of being struggled *over* (for contradictory purposes) and being implicated in the struggle *for* social transformation. While not explicitly positioned as Gramscian, Outputs #1, #2, #3 and #4,

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adopt a dialectical reading of civil society, highlighting competing and coexisting political and ideological tendencies that are given expression within it.

This body of work regards civil society as a sphere of associational life that accommodates community development and community arts organisations, social movements, youth clubs and projects[4], all of which may vary in the degree to which they are formally structured, professionalised or legally constituted. Influenced by Foucauldian theorising on governmentality, Outputs #5, #6, #7 and #10 also question the scope and nature of freedom within this sphere.   Relatedly, they problematise the outer and internal boundaries of civil society; outer –in the sense of enclosing it from state or market influence– and internal- in the sense of distinguishing different fields or norms of collective action. Outputs are interested in the construction of civil society as 'a possible solution for societal problems and a key to solve challenges of government', what is denoted as the 'governmentalization of civil society' (Pyykkönen, 2015:10). In the context of neoliberalisation, roles and responsibilities previously undertaken by agencies of the state or public administration are outsourced to community groups, charities, NGOs, and private providers. Consequently, Government policies and programmes actively promote, fund, and even initiate 'civil society' initiatives that are expected to mobilise citizens in the name of social and economic progress (Government of Ireland, 2000).   Concurrently, civil society organisations prescribe new roles and responsibilities for the state, urging greater, lesser, or novel types of intervention in the lives of populations.   State and civil society actors, whether operating as partners or mutual-critics, are increasingly concerned with the effectiveness and economy of government as practised by themselves and others (Pyykkönen, 2015; Swyngedouw, 2005) thus inciting new techniques and technologies of performativity management to ensure accountability, best practice, and demonstrability of evidence (Outputs #5, #7, #9, 10).

Therefore, the body of work interrogates how government is conducted in, by and through the interplay of state and civil society actors. However, a 'certain type of state is more suited to the pursuit of some types of economic and political strategies than others, because of the modes of intervention and resources characterising the structure of the state' (Lemke, 2007:52). This research recognises that the state, through its authority as a funder and as the preeminent site of policy deliberation, exercises considerable material and

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[4] Clearly, this is not an exhaustive list of the actual or potential constituents of civil society. My own praxis has reflected and stimulated an ongoing interest in these four fields of practice [Part 3.1], hence the focus of the body of work. In my role at UCC, I am also involved in the education of youth workers and community workers, and I am particularly concerned with understanding the changing policy contexts within which those students will work and the extent to which policy will facilitate open-ended and democratic relations with community groups.

discursive power as it interacts with civil society (Outputs, #5, #7, #9, #10). This in turn may limit the practice of freedom within the sphere of associational life and collective action, constituting instead 'a form of "regulated freedom" in which the subject's capacity for action is used as a political strategy to secure the ends of government' (McKee, 2009:469-470). However, compliance with state authority is not guaranteed and Outputs #5, #6, #7, and #10 affirm that within the everyday contexts of practice, multiple expressions of refusal, resistance and counter-conduct may give life to alternative visions of 'freedom'.

2.2: Community Development, Community Arts and Youth Work: Points of Divergence and Overlap

As Jim Ife (2013:8, original emphasis) explains, a range of terms, '*community work, community development, community organisation, community action, community capacity-building, community enterprise, community practice* and *community change*', are deployed in policy and practice contexts internationally. Sometimes these terms are used very precisely, to denote distinctive models of collective action or social intervention (Popple, 2015), but in other instances the usage is less specific so that the terms appear to reference roughly similar practices and processes. Output #2 explains that 'community development' and 'community work' are commonly used synonymously in Ireland. Across the body of work 'community development' is deployed to signify a 'process through which "ordinary" people collectively attempt to influence their life circumstances... premised on the belief that citizens can, or at least should, be active agents of social, economic, political or cultural change' (Meade, Shaw and Banks, 2016:2). In this usage 'community', itself something of a rogue concept, embraces affiliations and forms of association that centre on people's shared sense of place, identity, interest, history or hopes for the future. Allegiance to a community can be keenly felt by members or imputed and imposed by 'outside' actors. As Output #9 (2018:211) observes community development processes may construct 'communities' as 'already formed and buoyant or, alternatively, in states of emergence or decline'. Over its history, community development practice has been deployed to control or contain political dissent (Mayo, 2011): nonetheless, it is widely regarded as being underpinned by normative commitments –expressed as values or principles– to the creation of more equal, less hierarchical societies where citizens are empowered, or empower themselves, to actively participate in democratic life (Gilchrist and Taylor, 2016; Ife, 2013; Popple, 2015; Shaw, 2011). Output #2 analyses those normative commitments with reference to dominant political, cultural, and economic currents in Ireland.

Furthermore, while the body of work recognises that the impetus behind community development processes may emerge from self-describing communities, albeit often in response to challenging or oppressive circumstances, such processes may also be informed by a 'will to empower' (Cruikshank, 1999) on the part of 'external' agents (Output #7; Mayo, 2011). Consequently, there are 'varying roles for the state, national governments, political parties, local government, professionals, activists, local administrators, social movements, international donors, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), international governmental organisations (IGOs), private businesses, corporations and philanthropic foundations' (Meade, Shaw, and Banks, 2016:4).

In Ireland, community work and youth work are allied practices in the sense that the professional formation of youth workers and community workers often occurs in tandem (Output #5). Youth work too can be regarded 'as an ambivalent set of practices' that are linked with 'high-minded or progressive values', such as 'person-centredness', 'starting where young people are at', and 'voluntary participation' (Kiely, 2009:11-23; Spence, 2007). It thus echoes many of the democratic claims that are made for community development, while also manifesting a dialectical, contested status (De St Croix, 2017; In Defence of Youth Work, 2009; Kiely, 2009). When conceived as a democratic or open-ended practice, youth work attempts to create deliberative environments, where 'every effort is made to ensure that young people play the fullest part in making decisions about anything affecting them' and which guarantee young people the freedom 'to enter into and withdraw from Youth Work as they so wish' (In Defence of Youth Work, 2009:n.p.). In contrast to this vision, Output #10 assesses a policy-making climate in Ireland that, since 2008 at least, appears increasingly preoccupied with outcome-led programmes, 'evidence based' practice, and the demonstration of value for money. This policy turn accentuates and intensifies trends that emerged during the 1990s, notably the displacement of a voluntary and 'universal' model of practice, centred on the youth club, by state-funded 'special' projects (McMahon, 2009). A wider body of contemporary research in Ireland problematises policy and practice that pathologises specific cohorts of young people as objects of social programming and intervention. Critics argue that this trend is exemplified in the field of youth justice where 'lines between criminal justice agencies such as the Gardaí and youth work organisations' are becoming obscured (Swirak, 2016:163), but across the funded youth sector, targeted youth work that seeks to redirect the conduct of 'disadvantaged/problem' young people is on the ascendant (Kiely, 2009: Whelan and Ryan, 2016). As Output #10 analyses these developments, it builds upon and expands insights from Outputs #5 and #7, which track the concurrent re-signification of state funded community

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development and emergence of the Centre for Effective Services as a privileged policy expert. As with community development, this evolving youth work context prompts questions about the rationalities informing policy, the impacts programmes are expected to deliver and why, and about the extent to which so-called best-practice models accommodate the expression of alternative subjectivities by workers, young people, and community participants (De St Croix, 2017).

The term 'community arts' broadly refers to arts or cultural practice undertaken in, with and by communities, and that utilises a range of media and artistic forms. However, a more discrete usage of 'community arts', signifies processes that are led by and organised around particular communities; where community participation and ownership are emphasised at all stages of cultural production, distribution, and consumption (Fegan, 2003; McGonagle, 2007; Whelan and Ryan, 2016). Output #9 outlines some difficulties associated with defining the term, which is often used interchangeably with 'socially engaged art', 'community-based art' and 'participatory practice'. The challenges inherent in naming and defining community arts are not merely semantic but relate to: questions of value and whether artworks produced are or can be regarded as of equal standing to other artworks; debates about professional identity and who gets to call themselves artists; struggles over power, embracing issues of authorship, resources and public recognition; and contested understandings of purpose, and the relative merits of aesthetic and social outcomes (Bishop, 2012; Fegan, 2003; Gaztambide-Fernandéz, 2013; Kester, 2004; McGonagle, 2007; Whelan and Ryan, 2016). As it emerged in Ireland (Output #9) and internationally (Output #4) community arts practice has been linked with efforts to promote or expand 'cultural democracy'. At its most basic, this concept implies democratising *access to* 'Culture', whereby mainstream arts and cultural institutions ensure that audiences and artworks more broadly reflect social diversity (Gaztambide-Fernandéz, 2013). More profoundly and more critically, Outputs #4 and #9, propose that 'cultural democracy' also demands 'greater public recognition of and support for the diversity of expressive forms, aesthetic practices and spaces of production within society' (Output #9, 2018:210). Outputs discuss the ongoing challenge presented by and to such a democratic commitment given the arts' imbrication with multiple forms of inequality or exclusion and given the influence of economistic and instrumentalist rationalities within the social and cultural policy-making spheres. As Irish and international research shows, this latter trend is exacerbated by the expectation that community arts processes generate social or economic dividends for public policy and community development programmes, an expectation that effectively sacrifices aesthetics at the altar of utility (Bishop, 2012; Gaztambide-Fernandéz,

2013; Whelan and Ryan, 2016). As Claire Bishop (2012:38) observes, 'without engaging in the "aesthetic thing", the work of art in all its singularity, everything remains contained and in its place –subordinated to a stark statistical affirmation of use-values, direct effects and a preoccupation with moral exemplarity'. Outputs #4 and #9 probe the parallels between and scope for greater exchange between community arts and community development praxis: crucially, this does not mean surrendering the former to the latter, but instead means asserting a more 'expressive and expansive understanding of culture, citizenship and democracy' (Output #4, 2011:77).

2.3: Social Movements: Issues of Representation and Tactics

As with the previously discussed concepts, it would be easy to get sucked into a vortex of meaning and counter meaning, when defining 'social movements'. Borrowing from Jasper (2014: 5), this body of work identifies social movements as 'intentional efforts to foster or retard broad legal and social changes, primarily outside the normal institutional channels endorsed by authorities'. They are constituted by networks of people who espouse similar beliefs and values, and whose shared sense of collective identity informs and is informed by their deliberations and actions. Movements engage in protest activities in the public domain, but they are not reducible to protest alone; they may, for example, also develop alternative media outlets, critical spaces for cultural and political praxis or pioneering social and welfare services (Gillan and Cox, 2015). Like other expressions of collective action -community development, for example- social movements embody the 'instrumental', 'identity' and 'ideological' claims and needs of their members (Klandermans, 2007). They do this by asserting the overarching goals or values they espouse; but also, by prefiguring alternative futures and ontologies through the tactics they deploy, the participatory processes they enact, and the manifold ways by which they conduct themselves as agents of power and resistance (Output #8; Mayo, 2005).

According to Laurence Cox and Cristina Flesher Fominaya (2013), recurring 'origin myths' influence the nature and narrative thrust of Western social movement scholarship. These myths point to a paradigm-shift that occurred in the later decades of the 20th Century when an emerging generation of scholars began to recognise movements, and their members, as thoughtful and rational actors who could no longer be dismissed as marginal or dysfunctional (Crossley, 2002; Diani, 1992; Johnston, 2014). In the USA, *Resource Mobilisation* and *Political Opportunity* 'schools' researched the various incentives or rewards, opportunity structures, and strategic considerations informing people's engagement with collective action.

European theorising became associated with a *New Social Movements* approach that accentuated the apparent 'newness' of movements; constructing them as harbingers of a novel identity-centred politics somewhat removed from the more materialist concerns of earlier movements such as Labour (Diani, 1992; Johnston, 2014). Bridging or transgressing these artificial geographical and academic divides, scholars have attended the processes and relationships through which movements produce collective identities (Melucci, 1995) or their innovative and ongoing framing or re-framing of issues (Crossley, 2002; Snow and Byrd, 2007). Latterly, attention has been given to the place of emotions in mobilising and motivating participation, in animating or inhibiting solidarity, and in sustaining action and influencing wider publics (Chatterton, 2006; Jasper, 1998; Flesher Fominaya, 2010). Relatedly, Output #3 draws on the novel *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists* to highlight the emotional crises or losses of faith that may result from social movements' failures to mobilise support and effect tangible changes.

Social movement research analyses how movements actively make and re-make 'meanings' through, for example, their discursive 'framing' of issues: movement 'frames' seek to elicit public sympathy and solidarity, build alliances with other campaigns, encapsulate the spirit of injustice and/optimism that informs their vision of social change, and establish counter-frames to those circulating in 'official' discourses (Crossley, 2002; Johnston, 2014; Snow and Byrd, 2007). However, by going public with their struggles, movements become vulnerable to sympathetic and unsympathetic representations in the mass media and wider society. In this body of work, movements are understood to be enmeshed in ongoing contests over meaning, which are influenced by and which seek to influence, extant ideologies, discourses, and social practices. Output #1 details a specific instance of newspaper coverage as experienced by anti/alter globalisation activists in Ireland in 2004, analysing how media discourses may delegitimise, discredit, and distort the intentions and activities of social movements. Output #6, influenced by Foucauldian theorising on 'counter-conduct' (Death, 2010), analyses the *Older People's Uprising* as a form of movement-led resistance to elements of Ireland's austerity programme in 2008. It interrogates how, in their discourses and actions, movements may align themselves with accepted ways of articulating or doing things, while still transgressing other political and social conventions.

The dividing line between 'community development groups' and 'social movements' is inevitably somewhat arbitrary, especially when both espouse commitments to social change, popular participation, and collective action. Indeed, some movements have evolved into community development organisations (Varley and Curtin, 2002) and some community

development organisations have begotten movement style activity (Bisset, 2015). While the body of work avoids settling on fixed distinctions between social movement and community development activism, it acknowledges the general drift of much state-funded community development towards professionalisation, managerialism and institutionalisation and away from an explicitly critical praxis (Outputs #5, #8). Output #8 (2017:400) focuses on if and how a renewed focus on the tactics of protest -with their potential to revive a spirit of agency, imagination, and purposefulness– allied to a 'reflexive' and nuanced politics of solidarity might help establish new grounds for co-operation between these 'estranged' fields in civil society.

Part 3: Theory, Methodology and Methods

3.1: The Body of Work as Praxis

This body of work responds to, critically interrogates, and attempts to reconcile analytical issues relevant to my own praxis. While my background is in teaching at University College Cork and I am currently an editor at the *Community Development Journal*, my academic engagement with Irish civil society has always been underpinned by my direct involvement in activism. Over the course of my biography, this has incorporated feminist anti-violence advocacy, adult-literacy, and community education, along with participation in youth work, area-based community development, community arts and community television projects. This activity has been paralleled by my involvement in social movements associated with migrant solidarity and anti-racism, trade unionism, anti-war mobilisation, women's reproductive freedoms, the 'reclamation' of public spaces, and the creation of alternative/critical public spheres. Consequently, and as Bríd Connolly (2008:20) highlights with reference to her own work on feminist community education, the 'academic' research has implications beyond its immediate subject matter, raising questions for and about me as someone positioned within these fields. Because the outputs are primarily grounded in documentary and policy analysis, with a strong emphasis on discourses articulated in and through written texts, the spoken voices of activists and practitioners as elicited through qualitative research, for example, are absent from the work. However, that does not mean the research is abstracted from the 'realities' of practice and in the following pages I clarify how my activist and research concerns overlapped and informed each other. It must be emphasised that those concerns were forged in and through the collaborative, tension-filled and dynamic contexts of *collective* action: reflecting debates, forms of action, and strategic positions that were continuously renegotiated via my relationships with others. Additionally, while the body of work serves as a forum for conceptualising and interpreting the evolving contexts of practice, I did not come to the research process with any pre-formulated certainty around what was 'really going on in community'. It was in the process of writing, researching and ongoing reflexivity about praxis that the relevance of specific theories or analytical perspectives became apparent.

Significantly, with respect to Outputs #5 and #7, which analyse the state's re-signification of community development through its funded programmes, I was a board member of a Community Development Project, *The Glen Leadership and Equality Network*, in Cork between 1999 and 2005. Immediately prior to that, I was involved in an advisory group

for the 'pre-development' of the project as part of the Government's expansion of the *Community Development Programme* (Output #7). Therefore, for a period of seven years, I was closely involved in the decision-making processes through which the project emerged, crafted workplans, developed a distinctive identity, employed staff, engaged with, and demonstrated accountability to state funders. In 2000 I joined *Cork Community Artlink*. As the project began to assume more formalised organisational structures and approaches, I served as a board member and/or as chairperson up until 2017. The fact of my involvement in these projects reflected an alignment with or allegiance to community development and community arts as values-led, democratic, and meaningful processes of social, cultural, and political change. Relatedly, Outputs #2, #4, #9, discuss the potential of such processes to inspire and create spaces for *participatory*, *empowering,* and *collective* endeavour that challenges inequality and hierarchy. However, my commitment to community development and community arts 'values' was/is necessarily provisional, critical, and reflexive: values can be brought to life or compromised as they are enacted in, against, and with countervailing forms of power. I attempt to capture this ambivalence about values and their contested character through my borrowing of Raymond Williams' (1983) concept and method 'Keywords' (Output #2) and Stuart Hall's (2000) invocation of 'impossibility' and 'necessity' (Output #9). Moving beyond the problem of semantics, Outputs #2, #4, #5, #7, #9, #10 highlight the material, governmental and political-economic factors shaping the 'field[s] of possibilities' (Thompson, 2003) for the kinds of state-funded community arts, community development, and allied practices of youth work, in which I participated.

My membership of management committees of community development and community arts projects resulted in a growing responsibility for and preoccupation with 'governance' and 'accountability', as those terms were signified in state policy. Over the course of my involvement, Government and statutory funder expectations of how projects could and should use allocated funding, how its use should be justified, measured, and demonstrated, became increasingly prescriptive. Accordingly, this policy turn, the rationalities informing it, and the techniques through which it was operationalised across the Irish social sphere are analysed in Outputs #5, #7, #9, #10. My time with the *Community Development Programme* coincided with a controversial review that took place in 2003, culminating in the requirement that all project workplans be endorsed by City/County Development Boards within the local government system (Output #2, #5, #7). This subjected projects to a new layer of oversight and upwards accountability. In 2014 the Arts Council (2014:n.p.), the key statutory funder of arts related activity, announced that funded organisations would be required,

from 2015, to 'comply with a transparency code'. That community arts projects now fell within the ambit of such compliance demands was testament to our success in cultural innovation and in securing state grants over the previous decade: by advocating for Arts Council funding we had helped to constitute the forms of power that now governed us. Taken together, such changes resulted in more extensive and intensive forms of performance government (Dean, 2010), which increasingly consumed my energies and focus. They generated tensions for me, and undoubtedly many others, relating to alternative or contrary visions of accountability, responsibility, and performativity –ones focused on the interests and expectations of community members- versus an awareness that the continuity of work I believed in was contingent on compliance. Collectively those of us committed to the projects' ongoing work and survival needed to navigate this complex and changing policy landscape in ways that were congruent with our hopes and values.

A recourse to theory or academic language does not (nor should it) position me above or outside the practices and processes being critically analysed. Indeed, I have contributed directly to the normalisation of the techniques through which community development and community arts activities in Ireland are governed. I have written successful funding proposals where outcomes were promised and enumerated or where discourses of social inclusion and financial responsibility were invoked to rationalise 'interventions'. As a board member, I have overseen the employment of paid staff and in my role as UCC lecturer, I have participated in the formation of professional youth and community workers. Output #5 problematises the professionalisation of community development in Ireland and its potential to serve as a Trojan horse for governmental strategies. But it also acknowledges what my praxis has shown, that professionalisation might serve as a buffer of defence for an under-funded and vulnerable community sector; that conceptions of 'the professional' are contested and contestable; and that professional community development or youth work (Output#10) might be grounded in and seek to embody democratic values. Consequently, my activist involvements are articulated with my academic research, with both reflecting on the limits of binary oppositions between 'community as authentic space/governmentalised space, invited space/popular space, professional/political' (Newman and Clarke, 2016:42); and in my own case, between the activist as collaborator or critic, as subject or object of government. This nuanced perspective on both the dynamics of professionalisation and those informing state/community sector relationships has been welcomed and applied by writers such as Stella Darby (2016), Manish Jha (2016) and Mae Shaw (2018).

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My praxis is not solely constituted by involvement in funded civil society: participation in social movements affords opportunities to act upon political claims that, while reflecting similar commitments to democracy and equality, move beyond the prescribed forms of conduct and tactical repertoires being normalised in much community development. Memberships of *Immigrant Solidarity*, the *Cork Anti-War Campaign*, *Reclaim the Old Head of Kinsale*, and other movements, brought participation in direct action, protest mobilisations and the public denunciation of oppressive Government policies. Output #8 recognises that the critical potential of community development can be frustrated and inhibited by the technocratic demands of policy. Against this, it argues that a considered use of protest tactics helps forge collective identity, purpose, and agency, thus extending the democratic imaginary. While they were enacted, our mass 'trespasses' at the *Old Head of Kinsale Golf Course*, formerly a right of way, temporarily reclaimed that disputed landscape for the public, prefiguring an alternative set of property relations. As Output #8 (2017:393), following John Berger (1968), contends with respect to the importance of protest demonstrations, 'trespasses' gave 'material substance and physical embodiment to what was in effect, up until that very moment, an "abstraction"'.

Outputs #1, #3, #6, and #8 acknowledge the contingency and temporality of the spaces of freedom and tactical experimentation opened up by social movements. For five years, *The William Thompson Weekend Organising Group*, of which I was a member, sought to create independent spaces for reflexive encounter and debate around questions of inspiration, political strategy, cultural practice, and solidarity across difference. Working outside conventional funding arrangements and structures, facilitated autonomous organising but rendered long-term sustainability improbable. Additionally, as my experience suggests, while protest might be regarded as 'beyond the Pale' in many community development, community arts, and youth work settings, even within social movements it generates profound dilemmas. Through my involvement in *Cork Campaign Against the Racist* [Citizenship] *Referendum* and *Cork Anti-War Campaign*, I was involved in many bruising and unresolved debates about the efficacy, legitimacy, and inclusivity of our protest tactics. These movements were effective, if always somewhat unstable, alliances between diverse groups and individuals; with members espousing varying views on how to win favourable media coverage or attract broader memberships. Both movements provided vocal opposition to Government policy but, ultimately, they did not secure policy reversals or decisively shape political outcomes. Despite our efforts to counter Government arguments and to take the 'No' campaign to rural areas across Cork, almost 80% of those who voted in the 2004 *Citizenship Referendum* supported the curtailment of the citizenship rights of children born to migrants in Ireland – a profoundly dispiriting result.

Accordingly, Output #3 (2010:68) draws on *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists* to theorise the challenges social movements or campaigners face with respect to 'making an impact' and negotiating failure. It analyses the trade-offs between activists' purity of purpose and marginality of status; as well as the risks of estrangement from the life-worlds and concerns of those with whom we seek to establish solidarity (also Output #8). Acclaiming and responding to Output #3, Fergal Finnegan (2011:273) observes that as it evokes the need for interchange between a 'politics of critique' and 'politics of hope', it offers 'historical perspective on how and why we encounter despair in a way that makes room for hope'. Based on my praxis and on the body of work, it is apparent that social movements *and* funded community development and community arts projects, are all precariously positioned along the hinterlands of hope and critique, of agency and structure, of success and failure.

Finally, my written work and praxis caution against the reification of categories of activism or the identities of activists. While there are real differences in the tactics, strategies and political claims deployed by institutionalised organisations and those deployed by social movements (Outputs #1, #5, #6, #7, 8), there is significant hybridity between them. Sometimes individuals embody that hybridity: I, and many others, gravitate between and simultaneously occupy the spaces of 'autonomous' and funded civil society. Even with their greater discretion around tactics, the social movements that are presumed to characterise autonomous civil society must reconcile and react to media (mis)representations, equivocating public opinion, repressive policing, and counter-framing by opponents (Outputs #1, #3, #6, #8). Autonomy is not an absolute state, and as Marcelo Lopes de Souza (2017:450-451) proposes, it is more helpful to think of an ongoing 'project of autonomy', where 'private freedom and an individual's quality of life are inseparable from the freedom that one can enjoy in the public sphere, notably the freedom to be reliably informed, to act and participate in decisions about collectively relevant problems'. The body of work and my praxis are concerned in their own small ways with finding and testing the limits of autonomy in civil society: this too is the shared project of social movements, youth work, community development and community arts. It is an ontological, academic, and practical project that demands the deconstruction of binaries, towards establishing greater common ground between various expressions of activism (Outputs #4, #8). As Paul Chatterton (2006:272) explains:

> common ground is not about linking up hitherto disparate groups of activists, nor recruiting more people to various activist causes. It is about problematising essentialisms such as activist and public, the committed and uncaring, and making connections

wherever they emerge. It is about making strange bedfellows and creative alliances between groups who don't necessarily agree on everything.

3.2: Extending and Expanding Theory

While the entire body of work demonstrates a commitment to the practice of theory and the theorisation of practice, Outputs #2 and #6 are contributions to edited volumes that I conceived and co-edited with colleagues. They are part of a wider project to support a distinctively Ireland-focused theorising of collective action, its imbrications with forms of power and resistance, and the material, cultural and ideational factors influencing its direction. The collection *Youth and Community Work in Ireland: Critical Perspectives* (Forde, Kiely and Meade, 2009) responded to what we as editors perceived as the limited body of Irish published material to address the concerns of activists, practitioners and academics within the broad fields of youth work and community development in this jurisdiction. We acknowledged our dependence on research and writings from a range of international settings; a literature that offered vital critical insights into the politics of practice, but which did not 'analyse the nuances of the Irish historical, policy and cultural context' (Forde, Kiely and Meade, 2009:2). Both the edited volume and Output #2, which featured within it, can be regarded as contributing to a rising tide of indigenous scholarship[5] which explores the dialectics of civil society in Ireland 'where the illusion of social consensus and harmony often masks real conflicts and inequalities' (Forde, Kiely and Meade, 2009:2).

By 2015 the mask of social consensus had slipped somewhat, as Ireland continued to negotiate the consequences of recession and austerity. *Defining Events: Power, Resistance and Identity in Twenty-First-Century Ireland* (Meade and Dukelow, 2015) interrogated and challenged much of the public discourse surrounding the fall of the 'Celtic Tiger' with its tendency to deny or diminish the presence of alternative and critical currents in Irish society during the first decade of the 21st Century: encapsulated in the commonsensical but inaccurate 'nobody saw this coming' refrain. Through their theorisation of a series of 'defining events' that occurred across the decade, chapters highlight 'struggles, controversies and antinomies' (Meade and Dukelow, 2015:2) whereby individual and collective actors contested dominant

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[5] Although by no means an exhaustive list, see the following contributions to that scholarship: *The Adult Learner, The Irish Journal of Community Work; Youth Studies Ireland*; Connolly, Fleming, McCormack and Ryan (2007); Connolly and Hourigan (2006); Dukelow and O'Donovan (2010); Fitzgerald (2004); Lalor, de Róiste and Devlin (2007); Meade and O'Donovan (2002a); Jackson and O'Doherty (2012); Powell and Geoghegan (2004); Powell, Geoghegan, Scanlon and Swirak (2012).

cultural, economic and political frameworks with varying degrees of success. Favourably reviewing the book, Liam Kane (2016:1) credits contributors 'for avoiding crude polarisations, for discussing the interplay between social structure and human agency, for complicating and questioning popular assumptions and for looking at how resistance and change both affect, and are affected by, policy-making from above and social movements from below'. Like other chapters in the volume, Output #6, which centres of *the Older People's Uprising*, demonstrates the usefulness of theory for unveiling new or hidden insights about what might seem familiar events. Foucauldian concepts of governmentality and counter-conduct are enlisted to comprehend if and how *The Uprising* subverted 'dominant techniques for the production of responsible subjects' (Death, 2016:202). However, Output #6 also accentuates the political and cultural dynamics that give government in Ireland its distinctive character; among them the persistence of clientelist and 'stroke' politics.

Additionally, the body of work validates theoretical or analytical insights from sources beyond academia. Outputs #3, #4 and #9 traverse the boundaries between aesthetic, social and cultural critique as they attend to the theorisation that can be rendered possible through a close attention to specific arts practices, artefacts, or processes. Output #3 discusses how *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists* anticipates key themes in critical theory and the culture industry critique, while also illuminating the dimensions and force of hegemony as the workers described in the novel defer to commonsensical rationalisations of oppression and its consequences. This reading was influenced by Raymond Williams' (1991:256, original emphasis) earlier assertion that the novel poses a powerful intellectual *and* practical challenge in its insistence that readers confront the nature and systemic causes of their/our collective predicament: 'You *are* a prisoner, and you'll only get out of this prison if you admit it's a prison. And if you won't call it a prison, I will, and I will go on calling it a prison, come what may'. Output #4, by framing the article's argument against an interpretation of Brecht's poem, reflects upon the potential for poetry and other forms of creative expression to harbour subversive and emancipatory analyses of human possibility. Output #9 presents an interpretive account of the *What If…* community arts programme unveiled in Cork in 2013. It explains the origins, spatial context for and creative forms adopted by the project and considers how cultural artefacts, processes and practices may communicate a diversity of meanings simultaneously. In suggesting that the arts might host such potentialities, it should be acknowledged that, as Rubén Gaztambide-Fernandéz (2013:231) warns, 'Experiences with artistic forms cannot be guaranteed' and audiences/readers' encounters with texts/artefacts are not predictable.

3.3: Contested Meanings of Critical Research

The body of work draws upon diverse theoretical resources to support and extend arguments, to elaborate or interrogate contexts and concepts, and to propose alternative ways of thinking and talking about collective action. As already noted concepts of 'power' and 'resistance' are central to the research and constitute unifying themes across the outputs. The research is committed to critical inquiry, premised on the recognition that there is 'no transhistorical, culture free, disinterested way of knowing' (Lather, 2004:207). Social science research occurs against the backdrop of and is imbricated with patterned and systemic forms of hierarchy or exclusion, among them the great seams of class and gender-based inequality, racism, and cultural imperialism. Critical writing about collective action means consciously and reflexively entering terrains of struggle -over meanings, resources, legitimacy and possibility– with the intention of calling out abuses of power; of contributing to a wider emancipatory project, albeit in what might be barely discernible ways. While the extent to which research such as is presented here contributes to material, cultural or political change beyond the spaces of formal academic circulation is questionable, at a minimum it demands rigorous analysis of 'institutions, ideologies, interests and identities that are central and often assumed to be good, self-evident and neutral' (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2009:159). The pursuit of this kind of analysis informs the content and concerns of this body of work: it acknowledges the provisionality, contestability and partiality of knowledge claims, including those made within the outputs themselves.

Outputs #1, #2 and #3 are explicitly critical in the sense of addressing: aspects of ideological hegemony and the maintenance of relationships of domination through consent and coercion; the role of the state in consolidating inequality; the mass media's involvement in dissimulating the interests and intentions of subordinate groups; and the potential for civil society actors to either act in concert with or against prevailing economic and social hierarchies. Although Output #2 acknowledges and urges reflexive engagement with different theorisations of the concept, in Outputs #1, #2 and #3 *power* is largely conceived as a capacity that is exerted by (more) powerful actors *over* others, with the concept of *resistance* understood as forms of action *against* power. Specifically, these outputs interrogate the power by which elite actors in the state or mainstream media secure their will against opposing interests, restrict the agendas of public debate, circumscribe 'acceptable' forms of collective action, or fabricate worldviews and understandings that undermine people's capacity to recognise 'real' issues. Social movements, demonstrations like the *Day of the Welcomes* protests (Output #1), and everyday

or workplace subversions (Output #3) are analysed for their potential to engender resistance to unaccountable uses of power and ideology. Retrospectively, I can see that the spectre of Gramscian style[6] theorising stalks these outputs: in their acknowledgement 'that the state only exercises power by projecting and realizing state capacities beyond the narrow boundaries of state' (Jessop, 2008:113); allied to their dialectical assessment of civil society as in certain iterations reinforcing hegemony through the mobilisation of popular consent, and in other instances as standing in clear opposition to the dominant frameworks of political economy. These outputs maintain a line of continuity with widely cited and influential earlier publications (Meade and O'Donovan, 2002; Meade, 2005), which characterised structured partnerships between state and civil society actors as limited concessions to a narrowly conceived recognition politics that did not challenge the hegemony of neoliberalism.

More recent outputs (#5, #6, #7, #10) reference a somewhat different critical tradition, one associated with Foucauldian analyses of power and government. Rather than being commanded as a fixed capacity by specific actors or interests, Michel Foucault, (1998:92) finds power 'everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere'. This is not to deny the persistence of 'major dominations' such as those centred on material inequality or patriarchal privilege. But Foucault (1998) tends to focus on the relational, dispersed, and mobile qualities of power; how it is constantly given expression, negotiated and renegotiated within personal, interpersonal, familial, occupational, community, national and international domains. He re-centres attention on power as a 'positive' force – albeit not in any normative sense– that guides, moulds and structures conduct in what are taken to be socially desirable ways (Lemke, 2002:52). Relatedly, these efforts to conduct the conduct - what Foucault (2007) calls *to govern* - of ourselves and others are not only imposed from above by a cadre of power*holders* but emanate from myriad actors and sites across society including social movements, youth projects, community arts programmes and community groups. These insights inform governmentality –i.e. the mentalities of government– approaches to analysing relations of power and resistance in contemporary Ireland, where attention is given to the rationalities, judgements and forms of knowledge that legitimise the arts of governing as practised *by, through, with* and *on* civil society (Outputs #5, #6, #7, #10). Outputs recognise that a 'variety of authorities govern in different sites, in relation to different

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[6] For Antonio Gramsci (1971:263) the 'State includes elements which need to be referred back to the notion of civil society (in the sense that one might say that the State = "Political society + civil society", in other words, hegemony protected by the armour of coercion)'.

objectives' and they question 'Who governs what? According to what logics? With what techniques? Toward what ends?' (Rose et al., 2006:85).

The body of work challenges conceptions of civil society and the state as clearly demarcated, but still interacting, spheres with discrete sources of legitimacy. In line with a governmentality perspective, Outputs #5, #7 and #10 ask readers to consider how state programmes and interventions invite, incite or sanction community development and youth work as specific forms of socially productive collective action. Furthermore, outputs record how organisations within the putative arts, community and youth sectors call on state and Government bodies to act in desired ways: they are simultaneously subjects and objects of guidance and reform. Outputs #5, #6, #7, #9 and #10 are also *critical* in that they scrutinise the rationalities, technologies and techniques animating processes of government, and their privileging of distinctly neoliberal subjectivities. They contend that policy increasingly tasks civil society organisations with the normalisation of entrepreneurial, self-monitoring, responsible forms of conduct that are aligned with the wider project of restoring or maintaining Ireland's economic competitiveness.

As Thomas Lemke (2007:52) explains an 'analytics of government asks what forms of identity are accepted, proliferated or on the contrary hindered or even suppressed' while highlighting the deployments of knowledge, expertise, technology and surveillance that render populations governable. This can make for a demoralising picture of a social world that is bereft of protest. While Foucault asserted that resistance and power are coexisting and co-constitutive phenomena, he is regarded as underplaying the significance of resistance as a theme in his work, a tendency that is replicated in the governmentality literature (Death, 2016*;* Peräla, 2015). Nonetheless, the basis for a more considered engagement with resistance can be found in the concept of 'counter-conduct' that Foucault introduced during his Collège De France lectures (Output #6). This concept seeks to capture the range and variety of 'struggle[s] against processes implemented for conducting others' and embraces myriad ethically informed practices of 'resistance, refusal or revolt' (Foucault, 2007:200-202). Output #6 uses the concept to analyse how strategies of power and resistance overlapped and informed each other as the *Older People's Uprising* contested an austerity agenda that conducted citizens towards the 'patriotic' duty of compliance. My original adaptions of the concept of counter-conduct to the Irish context and to *The Uprising*, which have been elaborated in related publications, have been welcomed as signifying a 'new interest in Foucault's militant politics' (Luchte, 2014:n.p.).

Reconciling these critical approaches, Foucauldian/governmentality and Gramscian informed/hegemony, is not without difficulties, and a body of literature has emerged to probe the possibilities for dialogue between them (Arnold and Hess, 2017; Jessop, 2014). The shift in theoretical emphasis within the body of work does not signify a refutation of one approach in favour of the other: rather the approaches are articulated with each other in recognition of the distinctive insights and emphases they offer. Gramscian inflected approaches, are alive to foundational asymmetries in power relations (Output #3), the ever-present threat of state-sanctioned coercion when consensus fails or falters (Output #1), and the importance of an emancipatory vision that goes beyond the academic, and often disabling, practice of deconstruction (Output #2). Foucauldian approaches, while more agnostic about the validity of any profession of collective interests, are useful for analysing techniques, strategies and technologies through which government is operationalised (and refused) in civil society (Outputs #5, #6, #7, #10). An articulation of these approaches means moving forward – through writing, activism, or praxis- in full consciousness of their tensions and points of divergence, keeping them in mind and drawing on them as the basis for reflexivity. Informed by the outputs, an articulated theory might encompass the following hypotheses. Power is successfully mobilised and misused by elite actors, while still circulating within and across all spheres of society. Resistance is often compromised and conflicted in its engagements with power, but still generates meaningful improvements in people's ongoing circumstances. Trying to conduct what people do, however well-intentioned, does impose upon their freedoms, but perhaps it can be done in the spirit of a project of autonomy that seeks freedoms beyond those promised by neoliberalism.

3.4: Promoting Theory as/through Dialogue

The research expresses a commitment to dialogue across theoretical perspectives *and* between what may be (perceived as) estranged fields of practice. Output #9 (2018: 218-9) operates on both fronts as it analyses the 'impossibility and necessity' of a 'materialist-informed conception of cultural democracy'. This involves consideration of the ways by which arts processes are governmentalised (in the Foucauldian sense) through their constitution as instruments of economic and social development, while also incorporating a Marxist inflected, cultural materialist framework such as is proposed by Raymond Williams (1981) and Marie Moran (2015). Output #9 also re-signifies the terms of engagement between community arts and community development processes by positioning aesthetics and cultural practice as central to

people's lives, thus rejecting the widespread tendency to subordinate them to other development agendas. A related dialogue regarding the potential for a reinvigorated concept of democracy that encapsulates creativity in its multiple forms is undertaken in Output #4.

Output #8 was published in a Special Issue of the *Community Development Journal*, where authors from diverse contexts across the globe explored how collective action and democratic claims are framed by contemporary social movements. This invited a focus on how movement solidarity and tactics are constituted in the face of complex and interlocking forms of inequality, active repression, or marginalisation, and the apparently accelerating pace of social fragmentation (McCrea et al., 2017). Integrating literature from both academic traditions, Output #8 proposes some terms for a reflexive dialogue between social movements and community development: based and building upon their shared association with a politics of collective action that privileges people's democratic agency. As it promotes interchange between academics and activists in both fields, the article acknowledges shared dilemmas or points of tension while identifying grounds for mutual learning in relation to organisational approaches or innovative modes of communication. Output #6 remarks upon the crucial distinction between social *consensus* and social *solidarity*, and Output #8 returns to and expands upon this theme. Solidarity is not a given (Output #3); despite its profession of collectivised power, it is fragile, needing to be actively created and recreated. Therefore, Output #8 poses questions about the bases of solidarity that are foundational for community development and social movements, and for all expressions of collective action: 'who speaks and who is silenced; what are defined as legitimate and illegitimate sources of solidarity; which collectivities are recognized and which are unknown or excluded; and what is the nature of agency for those involved?' (Output #8, 2017:395-396).

3.5: Methodology: Studying Discourses of Power, Government and Resistance

The body of work studies diverse discourses through which collective action is rationalised, signified, discredited, and legitimised. The term 'discourse' refers to 'a structured system of meanings which give individuals and groups identities and rules of expected behaviour' (Emejulu, 2011:380). A range of actors within the state system, civil society and mass media, invest 'collective action' with particular potentialities and responsibilities, and as they do so, they foreclose on others. Norman Fairclough (2003:23, original emphasis) explains:

Discourses include not only representations of how things are, they can also be representations of how things could be, or 'imaginaries'. They can represent or imagine

interconnected webs of activities, instruments, objects, subjects in social relations, times and places, values, etc. As imaginaries, they may come to be *enacted* as actual webs of activities, subjects, times and places, values, etc. – they can become actual ways of acting and interacting.

Through discourses collective action is simultaneously constituted as a 'subject', that is expected to do things or make them happen; and an 'object' that can or should be directed in particular ways. Incidentally, this is also true of the people who participate in collective action: they are represented as 'possible creators of their own identities' even while 'their identities and behaviours are structured and ordered by dominant ways of interpreting reality' (Emejulu, 2011:380), Therefore the 'fields of possibilities' (Thompson, 2003) for collective action and collective actors are at least partly constructed through discourses: crucially, political economic, material and cultural factors also influence their shape and form (Output #9). A concern with discourses recognises that although the terms used by actors to denote specific forms of collective action may be broadly similar –community development, youth work, community arts, social movement– the mobilisation of those terms reflects and enacts distinctive powerplays and power relationships.

The body of work's analytical engagement with the discourses of collective action does not reflect allegiance to a single school or methodological approach. Output #2 is framed as a contribution to critical praxis and invokes the 'Keywords' approach and method associated with Raymond Williams to interrogate the 'variations of meanings' hosted by the concepts 'process', 'participation' and 'empowerment' as deployed in community work discourses. While not engaging in the vital historical analysis that characterised Williams' own Keywords project, this more modest and circumscribed intervention is concerned with identifying political, economic and cultural factors that create the context for the production, reproduction and reception of these 'keywords' in contemporary Ireland. Output #4 is also a conceptual piece, which appraises the dialectical tendencies in both community development and community arts processes, while identifying potential grounds for a reflexive engagement between them. The need for committed attention to the *neoliberalised* discursive constitution of practice is an important theme, particularly when the ostensibly emancipatory language of democracy or creativity is colonised by economistic or managerialist rationalities. However, if collective action is (significantly) constituted by language, this suggests that 'agency' or resistance might be expressed through 'resignifications' of dominant discourses. As Judith Butler contends (1995:135),

> To be constituted by language is to be produced within a given network of
> power/discourse which is open to resignification, redeployment, subversive citation from
> within, and interruption and inadvertent convergences with other such networks.
> 'Agency' is to be found precisely at such junctures where discourse is renewed.

Therefore, Output #4 proposes alternative constructions of community arts and community development praxis, through its critical resignification and articulation of the concepts of 'democracy', 'cultural democracy', 'cultural resistance' and even the perennially debased concept of 'consumption'.

Output #1 is informed by traditions of critical medial scholarship, which analyse how newspapers and other media are enmeshed in ongoing struggles over representation that belie liberal claims of impartiality, objectivity, and the circulation of truth in the public sphere (Browne, 2018; Curran, 1991; Louw, 2001). Rather than emerging fully formed and ripe for consumption, 'news' is constituted through the selective framing of issues. It reflects contests over meaning and inequalities in access to distribution or communication networks. Taking these concerns as its starting point, Output #1 also draws on John Thompson's (1990) work on the modes of operation of ideology to assess *The Irish Independent*'s anticipatory coverage of the *Day of the Welcomes* protests that took place in Dublin in 2004. Lexical choices, juxtapositions or omissions, as well as article headlines and content are analysed in order to assess how the newspaper mediated and constructed the *future* activities of protesters: 'anticipatory narrative' refers to coverage taking place in advance of a given event. Output #1 identifies five recurring and distinct themes that permeated that coverage, and it analyses the extent to which *The Irish Independent* reflected or aligned with Government discourses on the legitimacy of collective action in this instance.

Outputs #5, #7 and #10, influenced by Foucauldian perspectives on governmentality, are interested in how policy makers have attempted to govern collective action in the context of austerity. Outputs analyse if and how recent shifts in policy have re-problematised or re-signified what were previously constructed as legitimate expressions of community development and youth work. Relatedly, they are concerned with how emergent policy is rationalised, operationalised, and monitored; what this reveals about the state/Government's preferred engagement with civil society actors, and how it renders their conduct knowable. Carol Bacchi (2009) explains that policy cannot be taken merely as a response to given 'problems', rather that policy is productive and creative in that it constitutes the 'problems' it claims to address. Policy problems are selected, defined, and represented and they may be revisited and reproblematised over time. Even though 'competing constructions' of policy

problems emanate from civil society and the media, for example, Governments 'play a privileged role because their understandings "stick" –their versions of "problems" are formed or constituted in the legislation, reports and technologies used to govern… They exist in the *real*' (Bacchi, 2009:33, original emphasis). Outputs #5, #7 and #10 analyse the discourses and rationalities that are deployed within key policy documents that ground the fields of youth work and community development in contemporary Ireland. Accordingly, they acknowledge how some non-state actors –youth and community sector representatives, evidence experts or entrepreneurs, and philanthropic funders, for example- are gaining footholds within policy-making processes, while others lose status or become marginalised.

Useful approaches to analysing government in action are proposed by Mitchell Dean (2010)– 'analytics of government'– and Carol Bacchi (2009) –'What's the problem represented to be'. While these approaches are not formally adopted in Outputs #5, #7 and # 10, it is apparent that the questions posed within those outputs reflect broadly similar epistemological concerns. Together the outputs ask: (How) has collective action been re-problematised and by whom? What ways of acting and being (subjectivities)are projected on to community development or youth workers/projects, and what ways are being invalidated? What forms of conduct and knowledge are elicited, for what purposes, and through what technologies? What sources of authority, expertise or criteria of measurement are called upon to rationalise and operationalise government? What (new) forms of accountability are demanded from subjects/objects of government?

Pat O'Malley et al. (1997:510) critique governmentality studies for their tendency to privilege 'discourses and programmes of rule -the programmers' vision of government'- a tendency that consigns resistant discourses to the fringes of research. The body of work might, with justification, be accused of reinforcing that tendency because it draws so heavily on 'official discourses' as presented in policy documents, Ministerial speeches, Dáil debates and Government sponsored reviews. All social science research is necessarily selective, and all associated findings and knowledge claims must be regarded as partial. Therefore, outputs #7 and #10 acknowledge the partiality of their own epistemological contribution, affirming the potential value of ethnographic research that explores if and how programmes of government are realised or renegotiated in the everyday contexts of practice. Nonetheless, in line with Laura Nader's (1972:11) contention that we must also 'study up', the research shares the conviction that, in the interests of democracy, 'citizens need to know something about the major institutions, government or otherwise, that affect their lives'. It is precisely because the state-led policy developments that are discussed in Outputs #5, #6, #7, #9 and #10 occurred

under the cover of a generalised programme of austerity and effectiveness management (Parts 4.1/4.2) that their rationalities, technologies, and evidence-claims, require close appraisal. Because austerity was represented as a technocratic exercise, to be implemented and accepted uncritically, the means and methods through which it was effected were constructed as beyond dispute: consequently, the body of work probes around in this very taken for grantedness.

Bronwyn Davies (2005:1) contends:

> a necessary step in refusing [the] new conditions of our existence is to be aware of the discourses through which we are spoken and speak ourselves into existence. We must find the lines of fault in and fracture those discourses. And then, in those spaces of fracture, speak new discourses, new subject positions, into existence.

Output #6 explicitly focuses on resistant expressions of subjectivity or counter-conducts as it analyses the normative discourses and repertoires of action deployed by participants in the *Older People's Uprising.* Referencing the written texts of protest -including placards, online posts– it analyses how 'government' was refused in this instance, and how protesters both transgressed and refracted accepted norms of conduct and discourse. Relatedly, while not promising salvation from the excesses of neoliberalised government, Outputs #2, #3, #4, #8 and #10 consider if and how alternative conceptualisations of collective action –that consciously and critically reclaim the vocabularies, arts and tactics of resistance- might constitute ethically informed refusals of rule, along the lines proposed by Brownyn Davies above. In this, outputs diverge from governmentality studies that typically avoid making normative commitments or judgements, to explore praxis of a sort that might allow 'individuals the possibility to lead their lives as they see best: not on our own, however, but within a relationship with each other' (Peräla, 2015:107).

3.6: Texts and Discourses Analysed

This section outlines the range of state/Government, civil society and media discourses and texts analysed in Outputs #1, #2, #5, #6, #7, #9 and #10, given that Outputs #3, #4 and #8 are primarily conceptual in orientation. Output #1 centres on the content, lexical choices, and headlines of twenty-two newspaper articles published by *The Irish Independent* in April 2004, and that constituted its anticipatory narrative regarding the *Day of the Welcomes* protests. This qualitative, critical analysis identifies five key, recurring themes in the newspaper coverage of the impeding protests. The analysis is also supplemented and contextualised by references to

speeches by the then Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern, which framed the 'official' significance of this occasion to mark EU enlargement. Output #1 incorporates counter discourses on the politics of the *Day of the Welcomes* from social movement actors, Dublin Grassroots Network and Another Europe is Possible, along with 'alternative media' commentaries on 'mainstream' coverage of the protests.

Grounding its 'keywords' analysis of the concepts 'participation', 'process' and 'empowerment' in the Irish scene, Output #2 draws upon key policy documents relating to community development, including; *White Paper on a Framework for Supporting Voluntary Activity and for Developing the Relationship Between the State and the Community and Voluntary Sector* (Government of Ireland, 2000), *The National Community Development Programme* (Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs, 2000), *Many Communities: A Common Focus* (Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, 2005) and the *Taskforce on Active Citizenship Public Consultation Document* (Taskforce, 2006). Media sources, *The Irish Examiner, The Irish Times,* and state broadcaster *Radió Teilifís Éireann* (RTÉ) provide the substance of Government and opposition party statements on the retrenchment of Ireland's equality infrastructure. Civil society texts, such as the International Association for Community Development's declaration on *Building European Civil Society through Community Development* (IACD, 2004) are recorded as alternative conceptions of collective action and its relationship with equality, justice and rights.

Output #5 historicises the professionalisation of community development in Ireland. It assesses the changing governmentalities, expressed by state and non-state actors, identifying key policy documents that have sought to govern 'professional' community development. Output # 5 interrogates continuities and divergences in the rationalities informing: *Towards Standards for Quality Community Work* (Ad Hoc Group, 2008); *Final Report of the National Committee on Pilot Schemes to Combat Poverty* (National Committee, 1981); *Evaluation of the Community Development Programme* (Nexus, 2002); *White Paper on a Framework for Supporting Voluntary Activity...* (Government of Ireland, 2000); and *Effective Community Development* (Centre for Effective Services, 2009). That analysis is further refined and contextualised via references to contemporaneous Ministerial statements on processes of reform, and to the influential austerity-era *Report of the Special Group on Public Service Numbers and Expenditure Programmes* (Special Group/McCarthy, 2009).

Reflecting a concern with the discourses and practices of counter-conduct, Output #6 interprets demonstrators' use of placards during the *Older People's Uprising* to express normative, identity and political claims. The placards were displayed by protesters at the

Campaign for Real Public Health Service demonstration in Cork on October 18th, 2008 and during the *March on the Dáil* four days later.   Following a search of media reports on the protests and on protesters' grievances, Output #6 incorporates both first-hand and editorialised reports from radio sources –*RTÉ News, Liveline* and *The Marian Finucane Show*– and from local and national newspapers –*The Limerick Leader, The Irish Times, The Irish Independent* and *The Herald*.   It also cites online commentaries and discourses of resistance deployed by the Irish Senior Citizens' Parliament and Age Action Ireland, civil society organisations that helped mobilise the protests.   Counter-conducts respond to and beget new efforts at government, and the rationalities and discourses deployed by Government and opposition actors who sought to address or redirect protester demands are scrutinised, with sources including, Dáil Debates, Ministerial speeches, and the text of Budget 2009.

Output #7 highlights the changing rationalities and reforms through which the *Community Development Programme* was displaced by the *Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme*. To provide some historical perspective and to acknowledge significant moments and actors in both the advance and decline of the *Community Development Programme*, Output #7 analyses how community development was resignified in key policy documents over the period 1988-2016: *Towards a Funding Policy for Community Development* (Combat Poverty Agency, 1988); *Working Together Against Poverty* (Department of Social Welfare, 1995); *Evaluation of the Community Development Programme* (Nexus, 2002); *Effective Community Development* (Bamber et al., 2010); *Local Government Reform Act 2014* (Government of Ireland, 2014); *Our Communities: A Framework Policy for Local and Community Development in Ireland* (Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, 2015); and *SICAP: Programme Requirements* (Pobal, 2016). The analysis is supplemented by references to Ministerial speeches delivered over the course of the Programme's evolution. Important (context-establishing) documents, which rationalised and justified processes of reform, are cited: they include *Final Report of the National Committee on Pilot Schemes to Combat Poverty* (National Committee, 1981) and *Report of the Special Group on Public Service Numbers and Expenditure Programmes* (Special Group/McCarthy, 2009).

Largely a conceptual piece, Output #9, draws upon a mix of visual and written texts to evoke the divergent rationalities that may inspire or incite community arts processes. It begins with an interpretation of 2013's *What If... Voices from Shandon* project, based on my own engagement with the arts-works as a resident of the Shandon area and as a member of Cork Community Artlink's board of management. Output #9 also references Cork Community

Artlink's written and audio-visual accounts of the arts, consultative and collaborative processes associated with the project. The chapter evokes the political economic and policy context for community arts in contemporary Ireland, in light of austerity and in the shadow of an instrumentalist conception of culture. Recent Arts Council strategic documents, Government statutes, historical accounts of community arts praxis (Benson, 1992; Bowles, 1992; Clancy, 2004; Fitzgerald, 2004; McGonagle, 2007), and Ministerial and Dáil Committee statements on the socio-economic functions of the arts, contextualise the analysis presented.

Output #10 is concerned with the governmentalities informing youth work policy in contemporary Ireland: how policy problematises youth work practice, its outcomes, and the behaviours of young people; the experts, evidence, knowledge claims and technologies promoted; and how policies seek to direct the conduct of youth organisations and youth workers. The analysis attends to governmental discourses and provisions as set out in five policy documents: *National Quality Standards Framework for Youth Work* (OMCYA, 2010); *Youthwork: A Systematic Map of the Literature* (Dickson et al., 2013); *Value for Money and Policy Review of Youth Programmes* (DCYA, 2014); *Better Outcomes Brighter Futures* (DCYA, 2014a); and the *National Youth Strategy* (DCYA, 2015). This discussion is supported by references to associated policy and practice interventions by civil society organisations, such as the National Youth Council of Ireland, by evidence 'experts', The Centre for Effective Services, and statements from the Department of Children and Youth Affairs. Key developments in the evolution of Irish youth work policy, for example, the *Youth Work Act* 2001 and the establishment of the *North South Education and Training Standards Committee for Youth Work* in 2006, are recorded. Finally, more critical and open-ended constructions of youth work, by state and non-state actors, are highlighted, namely the *National Youth Policy Committee Final Report* (Department of Labour, 1984) and the *In Defence of Youth Work* collaborative statement by UK-based organisations and activists.

It is important to reiterate an acknowledgement made in Output #10, but which applies to the complete body of work. A focus on documents such as is found here offers valuable yet still partial insights into the dynamics of power, resistance and government as practised by, through and over collective action. While this body of work makes a rigorous and original contribution to critical understandings of the inter-relationships between the state and civil society, there is huge scope for ethnographic research that illuminates the perspectives of the diverse actors who navigate and negotiate those power dynamics and the possibilities they engender.

Part 4: The Body of Work in Context: Particularities of Time and Place

Part 4 outlines political and economic developments that impacted the constitution, organisational forms, and preoccupations of Irish civil society organisations, and that occurred within the time-period covered and illuminated by the body of work. It identifies distinctive features of the Irish social policy and civil society landscape and how they in turn influenced the tenor and scope of relationships between Government, state and civil society actors that are analysed in the outputs.

4.1: The Celtic Tiger's Death Rattle

The period 2004 to 2017 encompasses the endgame of the Celtic Tiger, the recession that followed the economic collapse of 2008, and the ensuing regime of austerity. 'Celtic Tiger' is the term commonly ascribed to the era of unprecedented economic growth which saw Ireland transformed from 'one of the poorest' European states during 'the 1980s to become one of the wealthiest (at least, in terms of GDP per capita) by the mid-2000s' (Fraser et al., 2013:41). The Celtic Tiger can be regarded as an ideological construct as much as an economic one: a dominant, but not uncontested, narrative of 'our' necessary faith in progress, prosperity and market-led modernisation was promoted by politicians, policy makers, mass media, social and cultural institutions (Coulter and Coleman, 2003; Kirby et al., 2002). Accordingly, Outputs #1, #2 and #3 problematise contradictions, in the developmental model pursued by Government at the time, policy makers' hostility to critics who questioned the foundations on which prosperity was built, and the role of mass media in bolstering the dominant ideological narrative.

Between 1987 and 2005 'overall average income' in Ireland 'rose by 125 percent' (Kirby, 2010:32) while incentives such as a low corporation tax-rate, the promise of industrial peace and the nation's educated workforce accelerated transnational capital investment in the economy during the 1990s, contributing to an annual growth rate of approximately 8% from 1994 to 2001 (Coulter, 2015:5). During the early-2000s, however, the Irish growth model shifted from its focus on inward investment and export expansion to become excessively reliant on credit-led property development or construction, land speculation and unsustainable borrowing (Fraser et al., 2013; Kitchin et al., 2012). With respect to the latter, the report of *The Commission of Investigation into the Banking Sector* published in March 2011 (Nyberg,

2011:12), recorded the disproportionate expansion of the Irish banks' loan portfolio relative to the size of the real economy; rising from '€120bn in 2000 to almost €400bn by 2007… By the end of 2007, total loans and advances to customers stood at over twice GDP, up from 1.1 times GDP in 2000'.

Although the resulting banking crisis revealed the extent of that sector's overextension in and complicity with the creation of a property bubble, ultimate responsibility for the associated toxic debts was assumed by the Irish state on behalf of taxpayers. Conor McCabe (2015:50) explains that Ireland's property boom was not an isolated case but reflected a 'global asset bubble', one of the 'biggest' in world history according to *The Economist* magazine in 2005. Internationally, policy makers and regulators, including the European Central Bank, seemed unwilling to rein in the financial sector that was fuelling speculative growth. This hands-off approach to regulation contrasted starkly with the interventionist response of the Irish Government when the Irish banks' stock market value eventually and inevitably collapsed in the context of an international credit crunch (Dukelow, 2015). A Bank Guarantee, announced via Government press release on September 30th 2008, outlined the decision

> to put in place with immediate effect a guarantee arrangement to safeguard all deposits (retail, commercial, institutional and interbank), covered bonds, senior debt and dated subordinated debt (lower tier II), with the following banks: Allied Irish Bank, Bank of Ireland, Anglo Irish Bank, Irish Life and Permanent, Irish Nationwide Building Society and the Educational Building Society and such specific subsidiaries as may be approved by Government following consultation with the Central Bank and the Financial Regulator. (Department of the Taoiseach, 2008:n.p.)

The consequences of the Guarantee and related processes of bank recapitalisation were profound. As the cost of recapitalisation grew exponentially, the state found itself in the throes of both a fiscal and economic crisis; rendered ever more acute by Ireland's exclusion from international lending markets and the downgrading of Government bond ratings. According to the National Economic and Social Council (2013:27) a growing rate of unemployment, recorded as 14.6% in the third quarter of 2012 as opposed to 4.7% for the equivalent period in 2007, was initially marked by a high 'male unemployment rate', linked to the scale of 'job losses in the construction sector and allied trades'. A series of deflationary budgets could not match the debt burden being shouldered by the state. In November 2010, following a pantomime of denial and obfuscation by Government members, Ireland acceded to the terms and conditions associated with an €85 billion 'bailout', funded by the Troika of the European

Union, the International Monetary Fund and EU Bilateral Lenders and from the state's own National Pensions Reserve Fund. The euphemistic language of 'budgetary adjustment' denoted swingeing public spending retrenchment measures (€10 billion) and additional taxes/charges (€5 billion) that were instituted in the period 2011 to 2014 to secure a targeted deficit of 3% or less, with an especially punitive '€6 billion front-loading of fiscal adjustments and other measures in 2011' (Houses of the Oireachtas, 2013:346-347).

Colin Coulter (2015:9) contends that the era of austerity resulted in the extraction of approximately €28 billion or the equivalent of 20% of GDP from the Irish economy. This 'case of debt displacement and replacement belongs to a broader set of responses' that occasioned 'enormous transfers of wealth' internationally as nation states reacted to the global crisis in 'market-friendly ways' (Dukelow, 2015:151). This fluid and contradictory political economic context, characterised by boom, crisis, austerity, and a still uncertain aftermath, constitutes the backdrop against which the body of work was written, and published. Outputs #2, #5, #6, #7, #9 and #10 interrogate how austerity provided rationale and opportunity for the Government's re-problematisation of the terms underpinning its engagement with the community development, community arts and youth work organisations it funds.

4.2: Civil Society and Collective Action in the Era of Austerity

The global crisis saw the discourses and practices of neoliberalism temporarily flounder yet ultimately secure their own vindication in spite or, perhaps, because of the variegated and contradictory character of neoliberalisation internationally (Peck, 2013). As the body of work analyses the implications of austerity for community development, youth work, social movements and community arts organisations, it recognises that they were operating in an increasingly vulnerable 'social sphere', while engaging with constituencies who were adjusting to reduced welfare payments, increased taxes and charges, and constrained or absent public services (Output #2, #5, #6, #7, #9, #10). Against dominant media and political accounts of a populace uniformly and deservedly 'sharing the pain', recent scholarship records how factors like class, gender, ethnicity, i.e. the position of Travellers, and age mediated citizens' experiences of austerity (Barry, 2014; Community Platform, 2014; Harvey, 2013; National Economic and Social Council, 2013). Brian Harvey (2013:38) documents the penalising consequences of retrenchment for Traveller programmes and services in the period 2008 to 2013: cutbacks of 86.6% for Traveller education, 85% for accommodation and 63.6% for national Traveller organisations. The National Economic and Social Council (2013:17) posits

that young people were 'hardest hit by the crisis' due to their vulnerability to unemployment. Because of women's disproportionate reliance on the 'social sphere' as site of employment and income protection, austerity was also gendered: jobs and contracts were lost to the public and community and voluntary sectors; welfare payments for carers, child benefit, and social supports for families were restricted thus generating significant hardships for women (Barry, 2014:8-9).

A full reckoning of the general and specific impacts of austerity is beyond the scope of this document, but they were acute and unprecedented in the history of the post-colonial Irish state (Coulter, 2015). The body of work highlights the disproportionate and punitive loss of resources to community, youth and arts sector organisations and it analyses how the prospect of further withdrawals, along with the reconfiguration or review of programmes, rationalised and operationalised new funding conditionalities in the social sphere (Output #5, #7, #9, #10). Austerity was not only 'material' or 'economic', it was discursive and ideological as Government spokespeople, media commentators and policy advisors solicited public consent for its roll-out (Outputs #5, #6, #7). Discursive repertories were somewhat contradictory as blame was simultaneously democratised -the 'we all partied [during the Celtic Tiger]' frame– yet strategically targeted through, for example, the scapegoating of public sector workers and welfare recipients in order to justify encroachments on their pay and conditions (Output #6; O'Flynn et al., 2014; Mercille, 2014). Furthermore, populist narratives of causality or blame tended to be so generalising and universalising -it was a global recession and beyond our control– that they occluded more nuanced appraisals of the dynamics of economic power, sectoral influence and political responsibility within the Irish state. Alternatively, they were so narrowly fixated on the failures and failings of individuals –politicians, bankers, irresponsible citizens- as to evade analysis of the systemic crises of late capitalism and the consequences of neoliberalisation (Outputs #6, #7; Coulter, 2015; Meade, 2012).

Ireland's transition from boom to bust cast doubt upon the willingness and capacity of the state to resource the social and cultural spheres, with Government demanding more effectiveness, accountability, and alignment of activities in exchange for public subsidy (Outputs #5, #6, #7, #9, #10). However, there is another sense in which the 'conduct' of civil society was disputed at this time. In public and academic commentaries, the apparent absence of mass opposition or sustained resistance to austerity incited considerable interest, much of it approving: how to explain the docility of Ireland's civil society when confronted with direct assaults on citizen welfare, public services and on its own efficacy as a democratic actor within the polity. Social movement activist and scholar Laurence Cox (2013:n.p.) observes that it

became 'something of a cliché to compare the passivity of the Irish in the face of the Troika's brutal austerity programme with the inspirational resistance' of protesters in Spain, Greece and Iceland. Insofar as Ireland's reputation for passivity is merited, Cox (2013:n.p.) critiques the enduring influence of social partnership, which contributed to the institutionalisation and co-optation of elements of civil society. Nonetheless, there were significant flashpoints of opposition to specific austerity measures, including widespread boycotting of a new property tax. Such resistances, along with struggles relating to women's reproductive rights or to the state's stewardship of the environment, reflected the active presence of social movements in Ireland during this period (Cox, 2013). Mary Murphy (2016) complicates the dominant narrative still further, arguing that even the supposedly institutionalised Community and Voluntary Sector worked successfully (often behind the scenes) to mitigate or reverse welfare cutbacks. Its response to austerity was less obviously conflictual in character: eschewing mass mobilisation or disruptive tactics in favour of more defensive strategies, it lobbied successfully on single or targeted issues. Ultimately, Cox (2013) and Murphy (2016) both point to significant ontological differences between institutionalised and social movement oriented civil society with respect to use of protest tactics: but they differ in their assessments of the nature, efficacy and scope of 'resistance' as practised by NGOs and funded organisations, with Murphy more sanguine in that regard.

The permeability and permanence of the borderlands between social movements or protest groups on one side and institutionalised civil society on the other are important considerations for this body of work (Output #2, #3, #4, #6, #8). The *Older People's Uprising* was constituted by a movement of older people acting in concert and by organisations, like Age Action Ireland and the Irish Senior Citizens' Parliament, with a prior history of partnership with the state (Output #6). Participants performed their opposition to specific aspects of austerity while mounting a defence of the 'over-70s' medical cards'. Although they engaged in collectivised and spectacular protests, they did not necessarily identify or emerge as persistent critics of austerity: protest tactics were temporarily and strategically deployed. This suggests that in Irish civil society, protest is not always or necessarily linked to a more radical or long-term political and social critique. Furthermore, Outputs #1, #2 and #8 appreciate that the prospect of negative framing by policy makers and media or the threat of lost resources, credibility and policy influence may deter funded civil society from participating in protest actions. Nonetheless, the research proposes why and how an engagement with protest tactics might enrich or revitalise community development practice, while still challenging the

assumption that resistance is reducible to public protest or that social movements constitute an entirely separate sphere of organisation (Outputs #1, #2, #6, #8).

4.3: Continuing Traditions: Subordinating Culture and Society to the Economy

An important consideration with respect to Irish polity and society, and a recurring motif across the body of work (Outputs #1, #2, #5, #6, #7, #9, #10), relates to the primacy given to economic rationalities, as opposed to social and cultural ones, by policy-makers. Similar tendencies towards the 'subordination of the social' are identified by John Clarke (2007:974) in the 'anti-social character of neo-liberalism' as it manifests in and through contemporary welfare-capitalism. He details the characteristics subordination may assume; potentially 'erasing', 'privatising', 'subjugating', 'domesticating', 'narrowing', 'functionalizing', 'economizing', 'fiscalizing' or 'reinventing governance' of the social (Clarke, 2007:975-977). Significantly, the body of work recognises the historical continuity of subordination as a theme in post-Independence social and cultural policy. Outputs #5 and #7 acknowledge how welfare delivery was domesticated to the realm of family life, erased through the abdication of key responsibilities to the religious orders of the Roman Catholic Church[7], and repeatedly functionalised with reference to economic growth or prosperity. 'Unlike other Western European welfare states ...Ireland's trajectory has been marked by economic crises of varying degrees of severity since it gained independence in 1921, and lack of substantial economic growth prohibited extensive welfare development' (Dukelow, 2011:409). A 'liberal' economic model forged in the context of colonial dependence was integrated with a commitment to the principle of subsidiarity as espoused in Roman Catholic social teachings[8] with both endorsing a minimal welfare state and, when intervention was deemed necessary, favouring targeted over universal entitlements (Dukelow, 2011). The influence of Catholicism was also reflected in a hegemonic, but not uncontested, culture that was censorious, authoritarian, and distrustful of dissent, artistic innovation and sexual freedoms (Benson, 1992; Garrett, 2012; O'Carroll, 2002).

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[7] 'Other faith-based organisations provided 'minority' services.
[8] Subsidiarity recommended that 'the State ought, therefore, to let subordinate groups handle matters and concerns of lesser importance, which would otherwise dissipate its efforts greatly. Thereby the State will more freely, powerfully, and effectively do all those things that belong to it alone because it alone can do them: directing, watching, urging, restraining, as occasion requires and necessity demand' (Pope Pius XI, 1931:S80).

In contemporary Ireland welfare or cultural policy is less likely to be dressed up in the vestments of Catholicism, but the privileging of economic rationalities remains a constant. Developments as wide-ranging as, support for the arts (Outputs #4, #9), the expansion and subsequent retrenchment of medical card entitlement (Output #6), the celebration of European integration (Output #1) and the resignification of the *Community Development Programme* (Outputs #5, #7) are constructed first and foremost as consistent with economic competitiveness. Although economic rationalities subordinate other ways of envisaging and assessing what is good for society, they may not erase them entirely. The rationalities of contemporary neoliberalisation, intersect with 'extant cultures and political traditions' demonstrating 'convergences with and uptakes of other discourses and developments' (Brown, 2015:21). Similarly, at various stages in its history, the post-colonial Irish state has appended discourses of traditionalism, modernisation, crisis, opportunity, exclusivity, inclusivity, and partnership to its economic arguments (Outputs #1, #2, #5, #6, #7).

4.4: Collective Action in the Absence and the Shadow of the State

Another consideration when analysing collective action in Ireland relates to how it is constructed around the idea of or a commitment to 'community'. The semantic association of community with place was strong in the post-colonial era, mirroring what Paddy O'Carroll (2002) denotes as the drive towards consensualism in the public sphere with its disavowal of class-based conflicts. The minimalism of the welfare state reinforced the prominence of 'community,' and 'communities' assumed or were expected to assume responsibility for service delivery and social development within their own localities. Tony Varley and Chris Curtin (2002) designate coexisting integrationist and oppositional tendencies among the community organisations that emerged, reflecting divergent expectations of or relationships with the institutions of the state. The Catholic social movement Muintir na Tíre, established in 1931, was an early exponent of the self-help and mutual-aid discourses of community development. Additionally, traditions of political agitation, militancy, and collective organisation that characterised the land struggles of the 19th and early 20th Centuries and the establishment of the anti-colonial Dáil courts of 1920-1924 (Laird, 2018), were continued by a range of oppositional rural and urban community-based movements that emerged from the mid-20th Century onwards. In their various ways these movements and organisations challenged the state's failure to guarantee the civil, social and cultural rights of citizens; in certain instances, their accentuation of class, gender and other axes of identity refined and

redefined accepted understandings of what constitutes a community (Connolly, 2002; Forde, 2009; Powell and Geoghegan, 2004). For example, women's community education projects in urban centres created innovative learning environments where women could critically analyse and act upon the intersections of personal lives, public issues, and political struggles (Connolly, n.d.).   Influenced by international trends (Banks and Carpenter, 2017; Cruikshank, 1999; Mayo, 2011), the association between community development and places or constituencies of *disadvantage* was forged through the activism of self-identifying communities that lobbied for investment and resources *and/or* through the interventions of policy makers who promoted community development as a policy response to poverty, inequality and alienation (Combat Poverty Agency, 1988; National Committee, 1981; Meade, 2005).

Any analysis of collective action, in later 20th and early 21st Century Ireland must take account also of the influence of 'social partnership' as a framing discourse for and practical expression of relationships between Government, state and civil society organisations. Initially focused on the regeneration of an economy gripped by recession, the first partnership-based 'National Agreement', *The Programme for National Recovery* (1987) involved the state, Trade Union, Farming and Employer sectors in structured negotiations around Ireland's development agenda for the following three years.   The agreement's targets included reform of the taxation system, the introduction of growth friendly 'fiscal, exchange rate and monetary policies', reductions in social inequality, and employment creation interventions (Government of Ireland, 1987:3[2]).   Six further agreements were negotiated between 1990 and 2006, and over time the scope of social partnership embraced a wider range of developmental priorities related to culture, society, and environment.

Irish Governments were not satisfied to restrict 'partnership' to the national policy making sphere and the second national agreement, *The Programme for Economic and Social Progress* (Government of Ireland, 1991:77) instituted a programme whereby 12 area-based 'Partnership Companies' were established to coordinate local responses to long-term unemployment. The partnership ethos and structure were embodied in the companies' boards of directors, with members 'representing' community groups, state agencies, and the social partners. After an initial pilot phase and with the assistance and incentive of EU funding, the programme was extended across the country: by 1999 there were 38 'Area Based Partnerships' in 'Designated Areas of Disadvantage', 33 partnership-style 'Community Groups', 36

'LEADER 2'[9] companies and 35 'Enterprise Boards'[10] (European Social Fund Programme Evaluation Unit [ESFPEU], 1999:37). The culture and practice of partnership was also embedded in and through the state's expansion of the *Community Development Programme* that is analysed in Outputs # 5 and #7.

Social partnership was criticised (Meade and O'Donovan, 2002; O'Carroll, 2002; Ó Cinnéide, 1998/1999) as an expression of corporatist governance. Through corporatism 'the state confers a monopolistic representational legitimacy on certain organizations and grants them a presence in policy-making arenas in exchange for observing some restrictions on their articulation of demands, and support for agreements reached through corporatist negotiations' (Meade and O'Donovan, 2002:1). It allows Governments to designate specified 'sectors' and organisations as *the* legitimate representatives of *the key* interest blocs, provided and so long as their memberships' demands are sublimated through consensus-seeking, deliberative processes. Indeed, the criteria determining how and why successive Irish Governments appointed new bodies to social partnership's pillars remained stubbornly opaque. An unusual feature of the Irish corporatist model was its inclusion of a Community and Voluntary Pillar, commencing in 1996 with deliberations on the fourth national agreement, *Partnership 2000*. Larragy (2014) outlines the factors that led Government to concede negotiation rights to the new Pillar: EU structural funding conditions; community and voluntary organisations' ideological congruence with the somewhat left-leaning government in office at that time; the competency demonstrated by civil society organisations as they participated in other consultative forums; and the spirited and compelling advocacy of those who campaigned for a place at the table. Some members of the newly constituted Pillar constructed this victory as a shift towards a more *participatory democracy* with overdue recognition for the diversity of interests and identities across the nation (Meade, 2005; Meade and O'Donovan, 2002; Ó Cinnéide, 1998/1999). However, during a decade of involvement in national negotiations, members of the Pillar registered growing ambivalence about the quality of democratic arrangements on offer, the persistence of hierarchies of influence, the effacement of conflicts or antagonisms, and the limited scope of their own power (Larragy, 2014; Meade, 2005).

Changing policy priorities, expressed through Government funding streams or the expansion of deliberative structures, discernibly shaped the spheres of influence and

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[9] LEADER 2 was coordinated by the Department of Agriculture and funded by the EU Community Initiative.
[10] A national scheme of County Enterprise Boards was established in 1993 to support and advise businesses and draft county enterprise plans.

engagement occupied by civil society organisations in Ireland -but civil society's preoccupations were neither uniquely nor unilaterally determined by the actions of the state (Outputs #2, #5, #7, #9, #10). Actors within the community, youth and arts sectors invited state intervention in their respective areas of interest (Forde, 2009; Larragy, 2014; McMahon, 2009; Meade, 2005), while simultaneously lobbying to become recognised experts within various fields of 'governance-beyond-the-state' (Swyngedouw, 2005:1993). Because partnership was extended to the realm of local/community-based development and collective action, where it became a dominant frame of reference, the scale and intensity of overlap between the state and civil society was exacerbated (Outputs #2, #5, #7, #10). Partnership marked the normative and actual boundaries of unacceptable/acceptable civil society engagement (Outputs #1, #2, #6); promising parity beyond power so long as interest-groups 'productively' collaborated around agreed development agendas (Meade, 2005). To highlight these trends is not to exceptionalise the Irish case and Wendy Brown (2015:129), among others, has tracked the centrality of similar or comparable iterations of governance to the unfolding of neoliberalisation internationally:

"stakeholders" replace interest groups or classes, "guidelines" replace law, "facilitation" replaces regulation, "standards" and "codes of conduct" replace overt policing and overt forms of coercion. Together these replacements also vanquish a vocabulary of power, and hence power's visibility, from the lives and venues that governance organizes and directs.

From the 1990s until the recession of 2008, there was significant state investment in youth work, community development and in a burgeoning equality infrastructure (McMahon, 2009; Meade, 2005; Baker et al., 2015). In 2000 the Irish Government launched a White Paper that outlined the philosophical and practical underpinnings of its relationship with an 'active Community and Voluntary Sector' that 'contributes to a democratic, pluralist society, provides opportunities for the development of decentralised and participative structures and fosters a climate in which the quality of life can be enhanced for all' (Government of Ireland, 2000:9-10). However, as Outputs #1, #2, #3, and #5 indicate, such overtures did not guarantee a seamless or unqualified consensus about the nature and quality of Ireland's democracy or its development trajectory. The first decade of the 21st Century was marked by disputes that signalled the persistence of critical discourses, strategies and tactics within civil society, relating to: the formulation and content of national agreements (Larragy, 2014); the retrenchment of the citizenship rights of children born to migrants (Brandi, 2007); the

imposition of Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (Garrett, 2015); Ireland's proxy involvement in the War on Iraq (Browne, 2018); the (mis)use of natural resources by the state and corporate actors (Storey, 2009); and other deeply rooted controversies related to identity and material inequality (Coulter and Nagle, 2015; Linehan and Crowley, 2013; Meade and Dukelow, 2015a). Those disputes prompted manifold expressions of collectivised resistance -including court proceedings, withdrawal from partnership structures, political lobbying, street protests and direct action- each to be met in turn by different manifestations or degrees of coercive state power.

Related questions of power, resistance and the character of Irish civil society are explored in greater detail in Part 5, which offers an integrated thematic overview of the ten research outputs. It highlights their coherence, originality and relevance for a critical analysis of the dynamics of collective action in contemporary Ireland.

Part 5: Key Themes and Original Contribution

5.1: A Situation of Permanent Contingency

The body of work is original in that it ranges across and dialogues between the research fields of youth work, community development, social movements, and community arts, incorporating reflections on Ireland and wider contexts. A recurring motif, acknowledged in all ten outputs, is the contingency or semantic mutability of the discourses of collective action: leaving them vulnerable to deployment for contradictory or even problematic social purposes, while also investing them with a spirit of hope, human agency, and political possibility. Although Outputs #2, #4, #8 and #9 are explicitly theoretical and conceptual in their interrogation of these discourses, they are not mere exercises in academic deconstruction. In line with the critical approach described in Part 3, they probe discourses of collective action for their emancipatory potential; for how they might be reclaimed, used more advisedly, or articulated with each other and with alternative discourses. Output #2 critically analyses and re-constructs the terms 'process', 'participation' and 'empowerment'; keywords or values that are seen to underpin community development's distinctive appeal as an expression of communal self-determination and tool of policy intervention. It and the other chapters of the book *Youth and Community Work in Ireland: Critical Perspectives* have been very favourably reviewed and welcomed for 'examining the realities that shape contemporary youth and community work in Ireland and …investigating transformative possibilities which may serve as new directions for practice' (de Róiste, 2009:87).

Outputs #4 and #9 consider if/how the theory and practice of community arts and community development might establish mutually rewarding 'terms' of engagement, since both share commitments to citizen participation and democratisation. Output #4 argues that concepts of democracy can be deepened and expanded through a critical engagement with theories of *cultural* democracy, cultural *resistance* and cultural *consumption*. These ideas and the associated concept of 'the democratic imagination' have been extended and applied by researchers like Jennifer Spiegel and Stephanie Parent (2017). Output #4 (2011:69) re-conceptualises democracy 'as an active social, political and cultural processes through which change occurs in different contexts by means of subversion, opposition and resistance, as much as by participation and consent'. Indeed, Output # 9 argues that the theory and practice of cultural democracy can be made more robust still by grounding democratic claims within a

cultural materialist framework as elaborated by Raymond Williams (1981) and Marie Moran (2015). This framework attends to 'the material and productive nature of cultural forms –and correlatively the "cultural" character of the "material world"' (Moran 2015:63).

Across the research, 'really-existing' collective action is shown to be constituted at the 'intersections of "out there" structures and "in here" agency' (Output #2, 2009:58). The progressive meanings and possibilities of youth work, community development, community arts and social movements can be and are constrained in their varied and ongoing interactions with power. Output #8 observes that community development is deployed in the context of post-Washington Consensus policy adjustments or in the name of 'governance' to responsibilise civil society to deliver cost-effective solutions to entrenched social contradictions. In Ireland and the UK, 'derooted' (Davies, 2015) youth work programmes are expected to manage the conduct of young people who have been hardest hit by austerity (Output #10). Against such tendencies, the body of work asserts that collective action can embody a politics of prefiguration, whereby desired forms of social organisation and inter-relationships are enacted in the here and now of practice. Output #10 asserts that the principle of 'voluntary participation' be re-inscribed within the theory and practice of youth work, potentially re-calibrating power relations within youth projects by affording young people the freedom to engage or disengage according to their own judgments. Output # 4 problematises the economistic and instrumentalist rationalities associated with the 'creativity explosion' (Osborne, 2003:510) and their dominance within cultural policy internationally. Similarly, Output #9 (2018:215-218) analyses how 'the interdependencies of politics, policy, economy, aesthetics and arts practice' render cultural democracy 'a necessary if often contradictory or seemingly impossible project'. Nonetheless, both outputs maintain that the arts and aesthetics are terrains of expression and imagination, through which communities can re-think, represent, and perform their worlds in meaningful ways. Output #8 acknowledges that neither social movements nor community development organisations have any *a priori* claim on authenticity or democracy; they can 'fail', 'flounder' or become compromised. Nonetheless, both have created vital cultures of communication, solidarity and participation to protect citizens against the consequences of state and market authoritarianism.

All ten outputs display and effect a commitment to critical praxis, which 'means taking seriously the politics of material conditions *and* of our ways of naming, thinking, and talking about such conditions and the people occupying them' (Output #9, 2018:214-215). It means

approaching collective action, and its social purposes or value commitments, dialectically. The following sections outline other valuable insights into the power dynamics of collective action as illuminated by the research; insights that inform and are informed by the necessary and ongoing project of critical theorisation that is attempted in the entire body of work.

5.2: Depoliticising Collective Action in Ireland: Consensus and Economic Imperatives

The body of work analyses how collective action is constituted and represented in Irish state policy, media texts and in the discourses of civil society actors. It demonstrates, using examples from the diverse fields of civil society, the power of discourses to de-limit what is perceived to be legitimate or possible. Discourse is never independent of history, culture and context, and outputs repeatedly call attention to the enduring presence of a 'consensus imperative' in the discursive framings of collective action in Ireland. Paddy O'Carroll (2002:16) problematises the hegemony of consensualism in the post-colonial nation because it 'deprives society of the benefits to be derived from the airing of communal differences in the public sphere'; indeed, it 'anathematizes difference' (2002:18). The salience of O'Carroll's observations is vividly illustrated by Output #1, which centres on efforts by alter-globalisation activists to mark the occasion of Ireland's EU Presidency and the accession of new member states in 2004 with demonstrations against the Union's dominant neoliberal growth model. *The Irish Independent*'s anticipatory coverage of the protests replicated Irish Government discourses on the self-evident benefits of EU-style economic 'modernisation', thus denying modernisation's contested character, while simultaneously demonising the identities, tactics and motives of protesters. Collective action was framed positively so long as it uncritically celebrated this *Day of the Welcomes* and the officially designated purposes it signified. Communities were exhorted to participate in the festivities, as audiences or as hosts, but not as critics or dissenters.

Output # 2 considers the specific implications of this 'fetishization of consensus' for community development, how it occludes a serious reckoning with power and its inequalities, thus denuding commitments to 'empowerment' of much of their intellectual and political force. Hierarchy, discrimination, and control are effaced but not resolved when the 'official narrative of community development presents a perpetual and all-encompassing "we" but no "they"' (Output #2, 2009:78). Moreover, consensualism was not merely a figment of culture,

discourse, or ideology, it was given practical expression with the institutionalisation of social partnership as a mechanism for manging economic growth and for regularising relationships between the state, community development and youth work sectors in Ireland. From the 1990s, the state funded *Community Development Programme* -discussed in Outputs #5 and #7- was promoted by Government ministers as a partnership-oriented response to issues of poverty and social exclusion in 'disadvantaged' communities. Relatedly, the 1990s saw the closer integration of the voluntary youth work sector and the state, with a significant increase in funding for special/targeted projects. A new policy and statutory architecture for the advancement and recognition of youth work was created through the enactment of the *Youth Work Act* (2001), the appointment of an assessor of youth work and the creation of a clutch of advisory committees. Output #10 contends that Ireland's voluntary youth work sector did not experience these developments as impositions from on-high, because the sector had actively advocated for a policy architecture that would affirm its role in the delivery of supports for young people, and that would resource it accordingly.

Stella Darby (2016:978) commends Output #5's attentiveness to how 'the state-community relationship' is 'mutually constructed' from 'interactions between individuals in multiple roles' and she endorses the article's 'rich understanding of the interplay between neoliberalization and third sector work'. Indeed, this concern with illuminating the character and implications of the 'interplay' between civil society and state actors is a distinguishing feature of the entire body of work. Output #6, which analyses the protests associated with the *Older People's Uprising*, records how some of the institutionalised civil society groupings who participated, constructed their involvement as a call for the restoration of the national partnership deliberations that were abandoned by Government following the economic collapse. Outputs #2, #5, #6, #7 and #10 acknowledge that consensus has been pursued and normalised by civil society actors based on a number of strategic calculations: it affords access to, and recognition within the policy-making arena; it validates the work done in communities and may enhance prospects of additional resources; it constitutes a 'responsible' and culturally acceptable use of civil society's own power; and it potentially contributes to a more expansive and participatory vision of democracy in Ireland. Such considerations cannot be dismissed glibly, particularly in a context where funding for the social sphere has been grudging and ad hoc. But, as Output #4 elaborates, there is a risk that the ideology of consensualism with its materialised projection, the partnership structure, becomes regarded as the *ne plus ultra* of citizen participation and empowerment. This leaves unanswered profound questions regarding

the depth and scope of the democratic arrangements on offer (Meade, 2005); and regarding the inconvenient issues, unmanageable or unwilling participants, controversial perspectives and incompatible interests that remain.

Across the body of work collective action and civil society are positioned, potentially at least, as terrains of power politics, where forms of organisation, expressed claims and tactics of persuasion range beyond, and even contest, the norms of liberal democracy (Outputs #1, #2, #4, #6, #8, #9). Collective action may allow for individual, familial, local, or communal concerns to be scaled-up and represented in the public sphere. However, the research interrogates how, in their encounters with state, media and other authorities, these concerns can become reframed or re-signified as beyond the purview of political debate and engagement. Output #1 highlights how Government and media discourses actively sought to depoliticise thorny questions about EU expansionism and the purposes of collective action, through their appeals for community celebration on the *Day of the Welcomes*. Patriotism, the positive image of the nation and the strength of the economy were repeatedly invoked and interwoven to discredit protest or render it irrelevant. Output #6 (2015:161) records how Government ministers made similar appeals that 'citizens pull together and play our part' as they instituted austerity reforms in the wake of Ireland's recession and Bank Guarantee. Patriotic commitments and economic rationalities were again rolled together to elicit compliance with the withdrawal of universal entitlement to the 'over-70s medical card'. These attempts at depoliticisation sought to silence or obviate collective action of a sort that that might; remember the murky origins of the medical card in Ireland's culture of stroke politics; mobilise older people as voters and as protesters; or inspire more widespread and sustained contestation of the inevitability of austerity.

In identifying moments and means through which they were expressed, the body of work does not represent these deployments of an economistic/nationalistic ideological hybrid as new or exceptional. The research evokes the strong continuities with Ireland's well-established tendency for political, cultural, and social issues to be subordinated to a reified construction of the needs of the national economy. This has long framed policy makers' expectations of how state and civil society might productively interact and Outputs #2, #5, #7, #9 and #10 illustrate how the 'bottom lines' of money, jobs and competitiveness are still ritualistically deployed to rationalise state policies for youth work, community development and community arts. In 2009 an economist, Colm McCarthy, chaired the *Special Group* that was selected to advise Government on swingeing cuts to social programmes (Outputs #5, #7, #10) while a Department of Children and Youth Affairs commissioned *Value for Money and Policy Review of Youth*

Programmes was led by a steering committee whose primary 'expertise lay in finance, economic evaluation, auditing, and governance' (Output #10, 2018:24). Nonetheless, while the pre-eminence of economic considerations might be a constant, the specific vocabularies, technologies and knowledge claims underpinning the policy reforms that are now impacting civil society have evolved to reflect distinctly neoliberal rationalities. The body of work attempts to capture the specificity of those developments, while also analysing and highlighting their broader significance.

5.3: Collective Action and the Meaningfulness of Culture and the Arts

A singular feature of this research is its interest in 'culture' and the 'arts', why and how they are meaningful to people, if and how they should be democratised, and what they might express when positioned as sites of or for collective action (Outputs #3, #4, #9). The meaningfulness of cultural artefacts or practices can relate to the skill or artistry with which the combined elements of content, medium and form communicate the nuance or complexity of people's experiences. Output #3 was written in response to an invitation to identify 'mobilising' texts that 'offer analytical tools that can serve as resources for contemporary social movement activity' (O'Donovan and Dukelow, 2010:3). Output #3 positions *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists* as a 'working class novel', in the sense of being about the work, home-lives and leisure-time of working class people; and in the sense of being written by a working-class writer. Both characteristics render it somewhat exceptional in the accepted canon of 'classic' literature. However, *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists* goes beyond description to present a sophisticated, layered analysis of capitalism –incorporating, as Output #3 argues, the kinds of artistic and social critique practised by William Morris (1944) and more recently elaborated by Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello (2005)- while still resolutely functioning as a novel. The book's medium and form are intrinsic to how it communicates with readers as a problem-posing text in the Freirean sense: the command of language on the page; the developmental arcs of plot and characterisation; the use of rhetorical or jarring devices; how readers are invited to empathise or identify with different characters as the 'story' unfolds. Output #3 (2019:66) finds that Tressell maintains a critical distance between himself as author and his lead characters, often chiding them for their lapses into ideology, but that this 'is less a commentary on the health of their consciousness than an attempt to activate the consciousness' of readers, by laying bare what each character cannot see with respect to his/her subject position within capitalism.

By exposing the contradictions between radical ideas and practice, between dominant ideologies and people's material existences, Robert Tressell asks readers to 'fill the intellectual space' revealed within the text (Output #3, 2010:66). Cultural and arts practices can assume a more 'activist' character, moving into public realms and engaging groups of people as participants, thus building, practising and representing solidarity through aesthetic forms. Therefore, outputs illustrate some of the ways by which communities create culture and by which culture creates communities. According to Kenny, McGrath and Phillips (2018: xxxii) Output #9 successfully captures how 'art can fuel the collective imagination and create a democratic public space', while simultaneously interrogating the factors that 'risk undermining practices that seek genuine collaboration, dialogue and conviviality'. The output responds to the *Voices from Shandon* arts programme unveiled in Cork in 2013. As a process, *Voices…* was constituted by over two years of collaborative workshopping between arts workers and community groups; as an aesthetic offering to the city and locality, it was constituted by 1,000 flags on 2,000 metres of rope suspended from St Anne's Church. Output #9 (2018: 203) considers how this collectively fabricated visual display, and the choral performances linked to it, evoked a community in conversation with itself and with the wider city. It projected a shared if somewhat elastic identity, while still capturing 'the idiosyncrasies and creative choices presented in the individual artworks'; what Paul Willis (2005:76) denotes elsewhere as the 'sense-full-ness' of participants' 'lived aesthetics'.

In order to conceptualise the meaningfulness of the kinds of communication that are highlighted above, Output #4 (2011:70) proposes a vision of cultural democracy where all, irrespective of arts training or professional status, are recognised as 'as creators, as opposed to mere audiences or spectators' who are actively involved in the 'making, consumption and distribution of culture'. As an ethical starting point, this creates scope for further consideration of the extent to which there is 'parity of esteem' (McGonagle, 2007) for the diversity of forms, intentions, and spaces of cultural expression in Irish society. Outputs #4 and #9 recognise that 'arts' and 'culture' are themselves deeply contested terms, necessitating careful attention to the common or hegemonic ways they are deployed in the public sphere. The crudeness of some deployments is evoked in Output #1, which analyses how culture was festivalised and put in service of the *Day of the Welcomes* official programme, even as existing cultural traditions of May Day as a day of protest were overridden by Government and media commentators. Output #9 challenges the pervasive influence of the Creative City agenda, promoted by Richard Florida and city planners internationally, how it instrumentalises arts-workers and cultural practices as shock troops of economic regeneration.

Given this backdrop, it might appear that community arts advocates and activists experience identical constraints to those besetting youth work and community development - where economic rationalities are the benchmark for what is possible and practicable. However, Outputs #4 and #9 also problematise the tendency for discourses of collective action to position cultural practice and the arts as adjuncts to or instruments of the 'real' business of development, empowerment, or social inclusion. Here there are parallels with the work of Rubén Gaztambide-Fernández (2013:213) who warns that, by tailoring arguments around a narrow 'rhetoric of effects', advocates don a 'straitjacket' that constricts 'our ability to mobilize alternative ways of conceptualizing what we mean by the "arts"'. In contexts of diminishing resources, funding retrenchment and performativity management, the pressure to generate effects intensifies. As Output #9 elaborates, collective or participatory arts processes are responsiblised to deliver outcomes related to health, crime prevention or well-being in communities, to mitigate social exclusion or entice engagement with community development structures. In contrast, outputs assert the validity of culture as *culture* or art forms as *art forms* with aesthetic, expressive and imaginative potentialities that are necessarily open-ended and unpredictable. Culture and the arts are not just another means through which (other) humans are mobilised to act in socially desirable ways or to refine their habits: instead Outputs #3, #4 and #9 insist that culture and the arts are ongoing sites of struggle, communication, experimentation, fun, community and of human agency that are meaningful on their own terms.

5.4: Shifting Grounds of Transgression and the Limits of 'Responsible' Collective Action

Zygmunt Bauman (2000:17) argues that the coherence of 'communities' depends upon the imputed presence of an outside against which they are defined, and upon the 'struggle, day in day out to keep the aliens off the gates and to spy out and hunt down the turncoats in their own midst'. Responding to such provocations, Outputs #2, #4, #8 and #9 deliberate upon the scope for more expansive, less exclusive constructions of community. Nonetheless, Bauman's words highlight the double move involved in all invocations of collective identity or solidarity: the designation of legitimate actors and actions versus the transgressives, those actions and actors defined as out of time, out of place or out of step. The consequences of being so defined can be profound. As Output #8 contends, the ascendance of the far right globally illustrates how certain conceptions of 'solidarity', while powerful in their capacity to mobilise citizens, shape public debates and influence policy, largely serve to exclude and menace those who are

constructed as outsiders.   Notably, *The Irish Independent* and Irish Government's projection of community or who could be welcomed on the *Day of the Welcomes* did not extend to the 'bogeymen' anti-capitalists, anarchists and foreign agitators who were framed as fair game for surveillance by the security forces (Output #1).   Analysing *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists,* Output #3, examines the interplay of consent and coercion −of resignation in the face of oppression and fear of reprisal or ridicule when taking a stand- as powerful deterrents on critical forms of collective action. Output #4 contrasts the neoliberal state's deployment of democratic or partnership discourses with the authoritarianism of its market enforcement.   Relatedly, Government spokespeople attempted to splinter 2008's *Older People's Uprising* with litanies of those older people deemed 'undeserving' of the over-70s medical card: '"well-off pensioners,… senior civil servants, High Court Judges, property tycoons, ministers of state and hospital consultants"' who effectively constituted a 'rogues gallery of those deemed culpable for the excesses of the Celtic Tiger' (Output #6, 2015:170-171). Such efforts to 'out' the transgressives in our midst can, as Outputs #1, #6 and #8 recognise, foment rivalries and destabilise the solidarity on which more inclusive projects of collective action depend.

An important analytical concern in the body of work, therefore, relates to where and how the lines of transgressive or 'irresponsible' collective action are constituted. Outputs contend that those lines are neither fixed nor permanent but are redrawn to reflect changing configurations of power, knowledge and resistance.   Outputs #5, #7 and #10 are interested in how the more subtle, technical, and dispassionate arts of government -processes of review, evidence-gathering and audit– are deployed to establish new grounds for the public subsidy of collective action, so that continuity of funding has become dependent on the delivery of prescribed outcomes. The linking of responsible collective action −or as it is euphemistically framed 'what works' in youth work or community development- to financial resources, accentuates the disciplinary at the expense of the consensual; although, clearly, the maintenance of the illusion of consensus also requires a 'disciplined' civil society. The Irish state's engagement with civil society has taken an overtly punitive turn: the *Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme*, that eventually replaced the *Community Development Programme*, obliges workers to submit to an elaborate system of ongoing, mid-year and annual returns, warning that shortfalls in the delivery of contracted targets will result in the commensurate recouping of funding (Output 7, 2017:15-16).

This research illuminates how ways of *doing*, *representing,* and *accounting for* community development or youth work that were previously endorsed by and promoted in Government policy are now re-constituted as ineffective or not fit for purpose.   As Outputs #5 , #7 and #10 clarify, this is not because those erstwhile practices or processes violated the terms and conditions under which they were originally promoted; a Government initiated *Evaluation of the Community Development Programme ,* undertaken by Nexus in 2002, found that local projects had '"very significantly" enhanced the "circumstances" and 'opportunities' available in "some of the most disadvantaged communities in the country"' (Output #7, 2017:8).   Rather, those very terms and conditions have been re-problematised over the course of the last decade. The *Costello Report's* (Department of Labour, 1984) construction of youth work as an open-ended process of critical social education, that might support young people to analyse and change society, contrasts starkly with the *Value for Money and Policy Review of Youth Programmes'* privileging of 'needs domains' such as 'preventing drugs misuse …reducing anti-social behaviour …improving uptake of training and employment opportunities' (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2014:33) thirty years later (Output #10).   A comparable drift is evident with respect to funded community development, now explicitly tasked with activating unemployed people towards engagement with the labour market (Output #7).   Funded projects must perform according to new outcome-defined criteria and, crucially, they must demonstrate that performativity more effectively: the responsible formula incorporates 'improving practice' *and* 'proving practice' (Outputs #5, #7, #10). Since its roll-out in 2010, Ireland's *National Quality Standards Framework for Youth Work* has begotten a quality assurance regime, engagement with which is essential for youth projects seeking funding from the Department of Children and Youth Affairs. The *Framework* sets the standards for 'quality', evidence-based youth work and incorporates a 'shared lexis' for talking about practice. It thus provides stark illustration of how discourses delimit the *possible* and how *possible discourses* are delimited in turn.

Stephen Ball and Antonio Olmedo (2013:91) explain that neoliberalised conceptions of performativity prioritise results 'over processes, numbers over experiences, procedures over ideas' and the technologies through which performance is recorded also divide the 'successful and productive' from the 'irresponsible' subjects, with the latter becoming targets for 'exile or reform'. This body of work illustrates how this focus on performativity -and specifically performativity that can be competitively tendered, quantified, and costed- extends the influence of neoliberal rationalities within the Irish social sphere.   Those rationalities incite new

techniques of discipline and self-discipline over the conduct of collective action so that discourses and practices that were formerly constituted as responsible are now problematised as transgressive.

5.5: Governing and Professionalising 'Standards' for Collective Action

Output #5 registers a theoretical shift in the body of work, with the explicit adoption of a Foucauldian informed governmentality approach: it introduces concepts and themes that are developed further in Outputs #6, #7 and #10. The use of a governmentality lens for interrogating the civil society/state nexus in Ireland represents an original departure from much existing scholarship, where liberal, critical-pluralist, neo-Marxist or Gramscian approaches predominate. From a Foucauldian perspective, 'to govern' means to (try to) conduct the conduct of ourselves/others. A productive expression of power that elicits desired forms of behaviour, government is not reducible to the intentions, structures or actions of the state. As Outputs #5, #6, #7 and #10 demonstrate, a diversity of actors in public and private spheres seek to govern aspects of human conduct. Outputs evoke how civil society simultaneously 'governs' and 'is governed' through the deployment of varied 'technologies' –including professional practice-guidelines, quality assessment tools or mobilisation and protest strategies– and how 'government' is rationalised in line with the (often competing) knowledge claims of professional community or youth workers, volunteers, citizens, activists, state officials, ministries, evidence experts, academics or researchers. Within the body of work, the determination of professional standards or evidence-bases for youth work and community development are constructed as examples of governmentality in action. This analysis has wider international relevance and Output #5 has been cited by researchers interrogating the professionalisation of civil society in contexts that include South Africa (Hart, 2012; Shava and Thakhathi 2017) and Scotland (Fraser, 2017; Ginger-Garcia, 2014), as well as Ireland (McHugh, 2016).

The erratic pace of welfare state expansion in Ireland inspired civil society actors to become involved in aspects of service delivery, experiments in self-sufficiency or mutual aid, and advocacy around the state's development priorities. As Outputs #5 and #7 explain, co-sponsorship of the European Economic Community initiated anti-poverty programme of the 1970s can be regarded as a first step towards the Irish state's adoption and resourcing of community development as a technique of government, and towards the emergence of a distinguishable community development workforce. The intensification of the state's interest

in youth work and promotion of a bifurcated model, separating special/targeted projects from universal provision, became pronounced during the 1990s (Output #10). As subjects/objects of policy delivery, youth work and community development are signified and resignified in a range of policy documents and submissions (Outputs #5, #7, #10). Output #5 analyses two texts that have sought to specify the rationalities, practices, and identities appropriate to a professionalised model of community work. These are the *Report of the National Committee on Pilot Schemes to Combat Poverty* (1981) and the Ad Hoc Group's (2008) *Towards Standards for Quality Community Work* (2008); incidentally, both groupings were constituted by 'representatives' of the state, academia and civil society. Similarly, as Output #10 explains, the professionalisation of Irish youth work has seen the emergence of comparable cross-sectoral forums of collaboration and exchange. The *National Quality Standards Framework for Youth Work* was disseminated by civil society actors, and the National Youth Council of Ireland and Youthnet organised the '*How do we know it's working?' Conference* at which associated toolkits and impact measurement approaches were shared.

Such interventions notwithstanding, the professionalisation of youth work and of community development have not proceeded in identical or entirely seamless ways, and there have been stops, starts and reversals in the State's recognition and resourcing of these fields (Output #5, #7, #10). During the 1990s and 2000s the dominance of partnership structures and approaches, gave momentum to and influenced the form professionalisation took in practice, but austerity generated uncertainty with respect to contracts, work conditions and employment opportunities across the community and voluntary sectors.

Output #5 analyses how the Ad Hoc Group's (2008) *Towards Standards for Quality Community Work*, constitutes one effort to capture what is assumed to be distinctive about community development and protect it from dilution or abuse through unethical, unregulated, or incompetent forms of practice. The 'document seeks to reconcile its view of community development as a progressive praxis with the concern that it be "professionally robust and effective", that there should be "standards for professional community work" and its expectation that the identification of those standards is a first step towards "developing a framework for the endorsement of community work education and training" (Ad Hoc Group 2008:29)' (Output #5, 2012:890). This document emerged into an ongoing and unresolved debate about the extent to which community development workers can or should be attributed a professional or 'expert' status. Some critics contend that 'professionalism' or

'professionalisation' are not inherently problematic; instead it is the constraining demands of managerialism and neo-liberalised performativity that give cause for concern. Others argue that professionalisation and professional claims-making constitute a power-grab by an unaccountable cadre of self-regulating 'experts', violating community development's democratic and participatory ethos. Consequently, Output #5 (2012:900) contends that 'professionalism cannot be accepted unquestioningly or monolithically in community work; it is inevitably the site of competing and contested knowledge claims and there is nothing self-evident about its expertise'.

Together Outputs #5, #7 and #10 highlight and problematise the growing prominence, in the decade 2008 to 2018, of actors and documents that claim to provide evidence-bases for 'standards', 'quality', 'effectiveness', and 'what works' in collective action. Outputs track the ascent of the Centre for Effective Services as an evidence entrepreneur and expertise broker in the Irish social sphere, where its research has rationalised and expedited recent processes of 'reform'. This non-state actor replaced the statutory Combat Poverty Agency as the 'go-to-agency' for policy related evidence. Indeed, the hegemonisation of the discourses and disciplines of 'evidence-based practice' was also closely linked to the then dominant presence of private funder Atlantic Philanthropies at the intersections of state and civil society within this jurisdiction (Outputs #3, #6, #7, #10).

The extension and normalisation of 'evidence' claims belie the difficulties of establishing with any certainty or in any generalisable way 'what works' in either community development or youth work. Tania Murray Li (2007:277) warns that 'institutionalized processes of planning, regulation, law making and so on, operate by attempting to transform contestation over what constitutes improvement, and how the costs and benefits of improvement should be distributed, into technical questions of efficiency and sustainability'. Plans are based on normative judgments, but those judgements and their politics are disavowed in the name of objectivity. As Outputs #7 and #10 argue, outcomes cannot exist independently of purposes, resources and power, 'variables' that are negotiated in, with and through the extant processes of collective action. Furthermore, it appears that Ireland's evidence-base for what constitutes effectiveness is flimsier than might be anticipated. The Centre for Effective Services admits that its community development research points to what is 'promising' rather than scientifically proven (Output #7) while the comparative absence of Randomised Control Trials and other quantitative measures mean that youth work's evidence-base approximates the looser categories of 'evidence informed' or 'evidence network' (Output #10). These subtle

points of methodology have been overlooked by policy makers in the rush to reform and the dominance of 'evidence' over practice, however questionable its basis, seems likely to continue apace.

5.6: 'Austerity State' and Collective Action: Refining Irish Practices of Neoliberalisation

During the Celtic Tiger era, state agencies and successive (Fianna Fáil led) Governments heralded inward investment, property speculation and global competitiveness as vital to the resurgence and modernisation of the nation (Outputs #1, #2 and #6). Because the economy appeared to be buoyant, a somewhat 'expansionary social policy' could co-exist with a 'liberalized economic growth model' (Dukelow and Considine, 2014:418). The normalisation of social partnership modes of governance allowed trade union and civil society actors to bargain for increases in pay or welfare, highlight equality issues, and create a bulwark against more unrestrained expressions of neoliberalisation, even though the dominant logics and processes of capital accumulation remained unchecked (Meade, 2005; Outputs #1, #2, #6, #7). As Rob Kitchin et al. (2012:1306-1307) explain, Government Departments and state agencies stewarded a hybrid model of neoliberalisation in Ireland, which

> takes elements of American neoliberalism (minimal state, privatisation of public services, public–private partnerships, developer/speculator led planning, low corporate and individual taxation, light to no regulation, clientelism) and blends them with aspects of European social welfarism (developmental state, social partnership, welfare safety net, high indirect tax, EU directives and obligations)… Rather than being the result of some well-conceived economic master plan, however, the Celtic Tiger was the outcome of a complex set of unfolding, interconnected, often serendipitous, processes…

During the 1990s and early 2000s, Irish Governments and state agencies repeatedly affirmed their willingness to resource 'active citizenship', couching interventions in the language of 'enablement' and permitting some civil society organisations to act as partners in the technical arts of government (Outputs #2, #5). Nonetheless, the ideology and practices of consensus-brokering always concealed a more unstable set of relationships and power dynamics. Nationally, there were tensions within the Community and Voluntary Pillar with respect to their collective response to National Agreements, and there were conflicts between

the Community and Voluntary sector and the state with regard to the negotiating position of the Social Pillar vis a vis the farming, employer or trade union lobbies (Outputs #2, #5; Meade, 2005). With the recession, much of the partnership infrastructure that had been created over the previous two decades came to be regarded as redundant.   Furthermore, despite Governments' 'evangelical' support for community development, even during the early 2000s there was growing unease among ministers regarding the numbers of programmes and projects funded and regarding the 'autonomy' they were afforded (Outputs #2, #5, #7).

The body of work avoids lazy characterisations of a coherently authoritarian state that always and invariably uses its power to constrain civil society. Mae Shaw (2011:ii138) cautions against 'a spurious notion of independence for communities' or 'the state as a tyranny to be swept away', which merely legitimises 'further depletion of state services' and spending cuts.   Any such characterisation fails to acknowledge that the state, civil society, and the multiple spaces where they overlap, are 'site and source of a range… of governmental technologies, that variously seek to empower, conscientise, responsibilise, include, discipline, reform or mobilise citizens' (Output, #5, 2012:905). State policy has, at intervals, resourced potentially democratic and critical forms of collective action. As Output #7 details, even though the Programme was anchored within a partnership framework, the objectives of the *Community Development Programme* set out in *Working Together Against Poverty* (Department of Social Welfare, 1995:3) anticipated that projects would influence 'change in structures, policies and processes which contribute to poverty and exclusion' and pursue 'an equitable distribution of power and resources in order to ensure a fairer society'. The Combat Poverty Agency's research and advocacy discernibly influenced the incumbent Government's construction of community development as a response to the structural problem of poverty in Ireland.   Since 2015, the introduction of the *Social Inclusion and Community Action Programme* has seen the abandonment of this comparatively expansive rendering of collective action, in favour of much narrower employment activation and community engagement agendas (Output #7).

Viewing these developments through a governmentality lens, it is obvious that the problems and solutions ordained in governmental discourses and practices are not static: 'in the interplay of nonegalitarian and mobile relations' of power (Foucault, 1998:99) there are reproblematisations and emergent truth or knowledge claims, generating revised conceptions of what should be done, who should do it, the evidence required, and the optimal ways of acting in the interests of 'society'.   Responsibility for the economic crisis was displaced from the banks via the Bank Guarantee onto the state and its citizens, re-constituting it as a public

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spending crisis to be resolved through the twin tracks of austerity and increased competitiveness. Austerity gave added force to the neoliberal governmentalities –expressed as efficiencies, effectiveness. and targets- which have shaped subsequent policy reforms. Non-state advisors, primarily economists or evidence experts, were deployed to assess the effectiveness of the 'moving target' that is the state. The *McCarthy Report* (Special Group/McCarthy, 2009) provided rationalisation and costings for a review of the state's own structures –suggesting closure or amalgamation of specific departments and agencies– and the retrenchment of important funding streams for civil society (Outputs #5, #7, #10).

Part 4 emphasises the profound material and existential crises that austerity generated for Irish civil society. Ireland's Arts Council lost 30% of its funding between 2008 and 2013 while national and local arts organisations became embroiled in instrumentalist debates about their contribution to 'Brand Ireland', the marketisation of culture and economic regeneration (Output, #9; Meade, 2012). Outputs (#5, #6, #7, #9, #10) interrogate how the state and its advisors re-signified civil society as responsible for the 'regulation of human subjects through enforced competitiveness, targets-cultures and the insuperable logic of economic efficiency' (Output# 7, 2012:17). Janet Batsleer (2010:160) critiques UK policy-makers' attachment to 'liquid youth work', interventions that are individual-focused, time-limited, outcome-driven, and replicable in other contexts (Output #10). Similarly, in place of the community-managed projects of the *Community Development Programme* the Irish state now favours community activation that is delivered thorough short-term, contracted 'lots' that are awarded via competitive tendering (Output #7). The research finds that a flexible, efficient, neoliberal state will no longer be 'burdened' by long-term commitments to youth work and community organisations; it will be 'smaller but more regulatory… rolled-back but more disciplinary' (Output, 10, 2018:18). Or to put it another way, an increasingly risk-averse Irish state has fallen hard for the allure of 'liquid collective action'.

5.7 Resisting 'Government', Reclaiming Freedom and Solidarity

The body of work reflects upon and illuminates the contestations over power, knowledge and legitimacy that are shaping collective action in Ireland today. It evokes the ways by which community-based movements and projects, the workers or activists within them, and the citizens who are increasingly constituted as targets, are simultaneously subjects and objects of government. The developments interrogated by the research have been framed by the roll-out of a neoliberal austerity programme. Outputs theorise a challenging climate for funded civil

society, where resources are tied to elaborate conditions, and where cost efficiencies and outcomes are the primary indicators of achievement. Rhetorically, at least, neoliberal policies privilege 'freedom': of markets to grow and move, of consumers to buy and choose, and of individuals to pursue opportunities and advantages. In Ireland, the governmental strategies operationalised in and through civil society act upon the freedoms of citizens and organisations, who are exhorted to cultivate the 'right' habits of discourse and conduct and contribute to a competitive national economy. Furthermore, as Outputs #5, #6, #7, #9 and #10 show, neoliberalised governmentalities do not necessarily prohibit other discourses or forms of conduct. Instead they re-signify them as unpatriotic, unproductive, inefficient, or as lacking a credible evidence-base.

Rather than becoming mired in despair that 'there is no alternative', outputs are attentive to civil society as a space within which neoliberalisation and associated forms of government can be critiqued or challenged. Responding to Output #2, activist and scholar, John Bisset (2015:182-183) affirms its call for community work to 'explore and develop emancipatory egalitarian modes of thought'. While they may be ephemeral, speculative, and fall short of a unified programme of resistance, Outputs (#1, #2, #4, #6, #8, #9) analyse some of the ways people reconstitute ideas and practices of freedom, democracy and solidarity. This is not merely an academic task, it is an ontological one. Laurence Cox (2016:10-11) locates Output #1 within an approach to research that, although 'produced within the university', is undertaken by 'engaged scholars, often starting from an activist background, and in dialogue with movements'. Part 3.1 elaborates further on the inter-relationships between biography, praxis, and research that have inspired the body of work.

The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists considers the fundamental 'unfreedom' of workers who are theoretically 'free' to sell their labour in the market place (Output #3). Tressell describes the brute constancy of capitalist oppression as workers are threatened with the sack, with poverty and even with premature death. But, and even though he neither celebrates not analyses their power, he signals everyday or work-place resistances through which workers try to get their own back in small but material ways or through which they reclaim moments of freedom and dignity. Careful not to overstate their emancipatory potential, Output #3 reflects on the latent politics of these resistances, which suggest that hegemony is not absolute, that alienation can incite action however modest in scope, and that people are creative even in debased circumstances. The work-places of *The Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme* (Output #7) or contemporary youth projects (Output #10) might seem far removed from Edwardian-era Hastings, but there are commonalities in

how performativity is monitored and used to discipline workers. Outputs #5, #7 and #10 recognise that between the 'bottom lines' of policy directives and the 'frontlines' of delivery, various undetected forms of resistant conduct might find expression as workers challenge processes of standardisation. Indeed, this concern with the transgressive potential of everyday practices, also informs Output #4. It proposes that a robust concept of cultural democracy must engage seriously with 'consumption' to recognise the agency and creativity it may embody. '[In] their everyday lives and within the parameters of their consumer role, citizens will artfully and imaginatively, react to, reclaim and refashion commodities and experiences. The challenge is to locate the transformative and radical potential in such practices' (Output #4, 2011:77).

If politics or policy is to change, it is not sufficient for resistance to remain sequestered in living rooms or work-places, it must be publicised and collectivised. Outputs #1 and #6 detail and theorise two occasions of protest-style resistance in Ireland. The alter-globalisation protesters who contested EU sponsored neoliberalisation attracted considerable media attention, albeit much of it disparaging, but their protest re-politicised and exposed processes of rule that were otherwise represented as uncontroversial (Output #1). Output #6 analyses the *Older People's Uprising* of 2008, which was constituted by street-based demonstrations, pickets of ministers' offices, and interventions on local and national media. It followed restrictions on the 'over-70s' medical card', one of the few vestiges of universalism within the Irish welfare system. *The Uprising* was partially successful in forcing Government to down-scale the planned retrenchment of medical cards and in reminding policy makers that older people could emerge as a coherent and effective lobby. As it unfolded *The Uprising* became something of a media sensation and since then it has been a touchstone for reflections on the extent to which Irish people did/not resist austerity.

In a distinctly original analysis, Output #6 adopts the still under-utilised Foucauldian concept of 'counter-conduct' to analyse *The Uprising*. As Carl Death (2010:236) explains, counter-conduct approaches destabilise 'conventional binaries between power and resistance, government and freedom', illuminating 'how forms of resistance have the potential to reinforce and bolster, as well as and at the same time as, undermining and challenging dominant forms of global governance.' In constructing *The Uprising* as counter-conduct, Output #6, acknowledges that participants did not necessarily self-identify as activists or indeed as long-range opponents of austerity. They presented an ethically informed and collectivised defence of their cards while rejecting the rationalities and forms of conduct that were projected on to them by Government representatives. They demonstrated a shared sense of grievance and a capacity for transgressive action; action that incorporated protest tactics but that also played

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with Ireland's clientelist political conventions. As they rationalised their refusal of government in this case, protesters humorously inverted the same economic arguments, patriotic discourses and ageist perceptions that were invoked by Government spokespeople. As Output #6 contends, the *Uprising* tested the boundaries of 'responsible' conduct for older people as *citizens* and as *older people*. It showed that resistance can be impermanent but still powerful in its symbolic and material force; even when it is umbilically linked to the forces it opposes.

The body of work argues for an 'articulated' praxis, that is willing to establish alliances across presumed lines of estrangement or binary categories. This involves dialoguing about the grounds of divergence and of commonality between different forms of collective action; this is the explicit purpose of Outputs #4 and #8. Together they argue that culture, the arts, and activism should not be constructed as specialised fields for the 'initiated' but as open forums for democratic engagement. Output # 8 is concerned with the meaningfulness of protest tactics, if and how they can be reclaimed for processes and practices of community development. Against dismissals of protest as a ritualistic prelude to the real business of advocacy, partnership, or professional recognition, Output #8 highlights how the very enactment of protest forges agency, identity and a spirit of possibility. Protest tactics 'direct our attention to what people can do, what they are prepared to do and what they think matters'(Output #8, 2017:391). Like the arts or cultural practices, protest tactics are forms of communication and there are tensions in reconciling external and internal 'audiences', in balancing publicity with public participation, and in effecting the reality rather than the illusion of solidarity.

Finally, collective action or resistance depends upon solidarity, but the bases of solidarity can be elusive and transient. Output #6 contends that social solidarity is not identical to social consensus but may be better expressed through protest or opposition. In the interests of greater conceptual clarity and a more considered praxis, Output #8 considers different sources of and approaches to solidarity as outlined in the sociological and philosophical literature. It is a provocation to think about and enact solidarity reflexively, to acknowledge what is gained and lost when particular versions are invoked. It is also a reminder that solidarity can be based upon what is already presumed to link us -shared places, similar world views or values- but importantly for those who are committed to open, dynamic, and inclusive forms of community, it can also emerge through practices of struggle, reflexivity, and encounter.

Part 6: Conclusion

As Part 3 explains, this body of work responds to issues and dilemmas that have emerged through my own praxis in civil society. That critical and articulated praxis seeks to identify and effect forms of collective action that might contribute to a shared project of critical inquiry, democratisation, and autonomy. However, collective action is also the site of ongoing and unresolved power struggles –related to purposes, resources, and legitimacy: therefore, the outputs presented here trace changing configurations of power and lines of struggle that have become manifest in Ireland in the period 2004 to 2017. Although it is primarily concerned with Irish practice and policy developments, among them the implementation and implications of a draconian austerity regime, the body of work highlights dynamics of power, resistance and government that will be recognisable and relevant to activists and scholars internationally.

Unusually, but fruitfully, the collected outputs draw upon cultural materialist and Gramscian type analyses along with more Foucauldian style theorisations as they interrogate evolving relationships along the state/civil society nexus. Mirroring Gramscian concerns, the body of work discusses how civil society may consolidate or, alternatively, counter hegemonic ideas and practices and, despite the global dominance of neoliberalisation, it tracks the continuing and privileged role of the state in distributing resources and apportioning status to civil society actors (Output #1, #2, #3, #4). In its assessment of the democratic potential of community arts, Output #9, following cultural Marxists such as Moran (2015) and Williams (1981), insists upon the materiality of all cultural practices and demands acknowledgement of the political economic contexts within which the arts are embedded. Therefore, taken together, these outputs illustrate how broader processes of capitalist neoliberalisation intersect with culture, society, and politics in Ireland to constrain the democratic reach of civil society: nonetheless, those outputs also highlight the presence of and potential for critical and resistant expressions of collective action.

As it develops, the body of work increasingly emphasises how and why the state and civil society should be regarded as co-constitutive and overlapping realms. Beginning with Output #5, the body of work introduces governmentality style theorising to community development research in Ireland, an intellectual project that is extended by Outputs #7 and #10 with their analyses of the resignification of the *Community Development Programme* and of youth work policy in Ireland respectively. Output #5 (2012:892) contends that 'the state has been centrally implicated in calling the community sector into being and …in their turn,

community organisations have shaped and mediated policy delivery on the ground'. Outputs #6, #7, #9 and #10 suggest that the same might be said of community arts, youth work and even social movement organisations. A related innovation in this research is its adoption of a still under-utilised counter-conducts framework (Death, 2010; 2016) for analysing the *Older People's Uprising* (Output #6), thus demonstrating the salience of Foucauldian approaches for social movement research and praxis. As a novel contribution to the debate about the extent of Irish civil society's active opposition to austerity (Cox, 2013; Murphy 2016), Output #6 illustrates how protest movements can simultaneously refuse and refract aspects of state power and government, thus underlining the provisionality and contingency of the concept of resistance itself.

Taken together, the various outputs should be regarded as rejecting 'theoretical purism' of any kind, and as affirming the rewarding and complementary insights that can emerge from the transgression of theoretical and disciplinary boundaries. The body of work embraces a rich bricolage of literature from social policy, sociology, geography, media studies and cultural studies, but it also moves beyond conventional academic sources, most obviously in its critical re-reading of *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists* (Output #3). The research is ambitious in its breadth of scope, encompassing outputs on youth work, community development, community arts and social movements, but taken as a totality it shows that there are important parallels, points of convergence and of common ground between those seemingly diverse practices. Therefore, outputs encourage and, crucially, *propose* some grounds for dialogue between what tend to be detached fields of scholarship about collective action (Output #4, #8, #9). As Paul Chatterton (2006:277) explains:

> Learning, acting and talking together on uncommon ground can only really be achieved through a genuine desire to be free from institutional constraints and social norms and foster solidarity, mutual aid and an ethic of care amongst disparate individuals. Such practices eschew experts and blueprints, and can help seek out collectively defined escape routes from isolation and silence…. We need to do this not just within the academy, but with those that surround us who have become invisible through neglect, mistrust and despair.

Part 1.1 introduced three broad questions that are posed by the body of work. While those questions are substantively addressed in the preceding content of this Covering Document, especially in Part 5, it is appropriate to return to them for this concluding discussion.

How is collective action rationalised and (de)legitimised? Outputs draw on an original combination of written texts –including policy documents, newspaper articles, and activist placards– to analyse how collective action is discursively and differentially constituted by actors within the state, civil society, and media. Collective action is variously constructed as a resistant praxis, as a prefigurative praxis, as a contribution to social, economic, and cultural development, and as reflecting the interests and aspirations of those who might otherwise fall outside the reach of policy interventions. The body of work illustrates how civil society actors continue to invoke normative conceptions of collective action -linking it to processes of community building, participation, democracy, and empowerment- even though those actors' strategic purposes are as diverse as the contestation of EU-sanctioned neoliberalisation, the defence of welfare entitlements, engagement with policy making structures or the establishment of professional standards for community and youth work. Outputs #1, #4, #8, #9 and #10 urge writers, activists, and practitioners to be ever vigilant about where and how the ostensibly progressive lexicon of collective action is deployed: because they are repeatedly incorporated for processes of neoliberalisation, standardisation and government, concepts need to be actively reclaimed and rendered meaningful. Those outputs, therefore, offer vital intellectual and analytical resources for such a project of reclamation and critical meaning-making.

The body of work demonstrates how state policy discourses in Ireland endorse an active civil society so long as it operates within the dominant ideological frameworks of consensualism and economic modernisation, a position that has been echoed by media outlets such as *The Irish Independent*. Nonetheless, within the time-span covered by the research, a more explicitly disciplinary set of discourses and practices has displaced those associated with social partnership and consensus brokering. Outputs #2, #5, #7, #10 reveal that state support for, what appear in retrospect to have been, comparatively open-ended or deliberative forms of youth work and community development has been withdrawn. The twin obligations of proving and improving practice mean that funded civil society organisations are increasingly bound by tenders, targets, and outcomes, so that the limits of 'responsible' collective action are more narrowly and more rigidly defined.

The body of work recognises that broader democratic purposes for youth work, community arts and community development are still being proposed by activists, workers, and scholars, both in Ireland and beyond. However, Outputs #5, #6, #7 and #10 emphasise the decisive role of non-state actors such as the Centre for Effective Services, supported by philanthropic funders, as influential evidence experts and entrepreneurs. A newly constituted

'evidence base' has been deployed to rationalise and effect a reform agenda: one that retains and amplifies policy-makers' long-standing preoccupation with economic rationalities, while also embracing distinctively neoliberal discourses and practices of enforced competitiveness, performativity-monitoring, and effectiveness management. Relatedly, there are ongoing efforts by state and non-state actors to establish standards for professional youth work and community development practice, but they are somewhat hamstrung by unresolved and possibly irresolvable controversies over the desirability, practicability, and evidencing of 'what works' in these fields

What is the role of the state in governing civil society? The body of work represents the state as a mobile, dynamic, and differentiated actor, whose boundaries and responsibilities are constantly renegotiated. This is especially true in the context of neoliberalisation, which invites increased scrutiny of the roles and efficiencies of the state. However, the body of work shows that, rather than being abandoned, the 'state' is re-responsibilised to make neoliberalisation practicable. From 2008 onwards, a private (banking) debt crisis was reconstituted as a fiscal crisis for the state and reconstituted again as a public spending crisis that ultimately legitimised swingeing cutbacks to welfare, public and community-based services. The policy reforms outlined in the collected outputs were rationalised by and instituted under the cover of this regime of austerity. The effectiveness of state agencies and Government departments was reviewed by economic 'experts' and, in turn, the state enlisted new evidence experts to review the terms and conditions underpinning existing youth and community programmes. Significantly, in this body of work the state is represented as both the object and subject of austerity government.

The boundaries between the state and civil society are imprecise and fluid: civil society and state actors seek to induce desired forms of conduct and relationships from each other. One of the key concerns of this research is to expose and critically interrogate associated power dynamics, overlaps and contestations. Outputs #5, #7 and #10 carefully document how the economic crisis allowed policy-makers to reproblematise the state's responsibility for, commitment to and requirements of a funded civil society. State policy now attempts to govern youth work, community development and community arts organisations through an increasingly intrusive and prescriptive set of policy ordinances, self-reporting techniques and accountability measures. However, outputs also show that government is neither unidirectional nor uniform. In certain instances, such as the dissemination of the quality standards framework for youth work, civil society actors have advocated for and helped to operationalise new techniques of government. As the body of work details, community development, community

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arts and youth workers are enrolled in policy delivery processes to activate 'productive' forms of conduct among unemployed adults and young people. However, if practitioners simultaneously govern and are governed, this does not mean that state policy directives or evidence pronouncements conclusively determine their conduct: across the outputs there is an awareness that the everyday realities of practice are likely to be messier and more contingent than the alleged certainties of best-practice suggest.

What is the scope for resistance and alternative forms of relationship? Outputs highlight how Government, media and non-state actors attempt to resignify the discourses and practices of collective action in line with neoliberal rationalities and reform agendas. But, importantly, this research also points to multiple sites of active and potential resistance. Alter-globalisation activists in 2004 and older people in 2008 purposefully countered 'commonsensical' but deeply ideological interpretations of national interest and responsible citizenship. Although success was somewhat tentative, both movements re-politicised issues otherwise framed as non-political by policy-makers and media; movements demonstrated the countervailing power of protest tactics and highlighted fissures in Ireland's illusion of government by consensus. Additionally, outputs recognise that practices of community arts, community development and youth work, can and do build vital forms of solidarity, prefigure democratic relationships, and re-validate people's capacities for creative, collective action.

Ultimately, the body of work contends that spaces of greater autonomy, however provisional, can and must be clawed back by civil society. As observed already, this involves reclaiming the arts, tactics, and discourses of collective action, to accentuate their commitments to democratic, inclusive, and reflexive conceptions of solidarity (Output #8). Inspiration can be found in arts and cultural practices that nurture critique and imagination, so long as those practices are not crudely instrumentalised in the name of economic and social development. Inspiration can also be found in a re-engagement with protest tactics, which might offer a 'laboratory of possibility for those who have become jaded and disillusioned by the limitations of bureaucratic community engagement strategies' (Output #8, 2017:391). Neither brings any guarantees in terms of popular participation or political transformation, but they do test the limits of what is being normalised as legitimate and productive collective action. Finally, the body of work asserts and shows the value of scholarship that troubles the boundaries between the academic and practice fields of community development, community arts, youth work and social movement studies. It points to shared concerns and commitments, opportunities for mutual learning and exchange and it validates praxis that is open-ended and discursive. It

negotiates the fine lines between hope and critique as it addresses the impossibility and the necessity of establishing 'common' from 'uncommon ground'.

Part 7: References

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Part 8: The Outputs

The 10 research outputs are presented in the following pages. I would like to thank the publishers for agreeing to facilitate their inclusion in the hard and digital versions of this thesis. In the interests of presentation and readability, all outputs have been converted to the same font and endnotes have been converted to footnotes to ensure the coherence of the thesis as a unitary document. However, house styles with respect to referencing, as they pertain to individual publishing houses, have been retained. A complete citation for the published version of each output is included at the start of the relevant section, and readers should note that any direct quotations from the outputs that are included in the preceding covering document are taken from the published versions of the output in question rather than the original versions. The published versions are the versions of record.

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8.1: Output #1

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Mayday, Mayday! Newspaper Framing Anti-globalisers!
A critical analysis of the Irish Independent's anticipatory coverage of the 'Day of the Welcomes' demonstrations.

Rosie Meade

Abstract.

This article provides a critical analysis of the **discourses** employed in the Irish Independent's **anticipatory coverage** of the 'Day of The Welcomes' demonstrations that occurred in Dublin during 2004. These demonstrations were organized by a broad church of **'anti-globalisation'** activists who sought to use the coincidence of **EU enlargement** and the May Day holiday as an opportunity to highlight alternative visions of the European project. As Ireland's biggest selling 'quality' newspaper, the Irish Independent has had a significant role in **framing** public debates about key social and political questions in this state. I will show how, in the run up to the 'Day of the Welcomes', the Irish Independent's coverage discredited both the political aspirations and the potential conduct of protesters. The overwhelming thrust of this coverage was to sanction dominant **ideologies** in relation to **neo-liberalism**, EU expansionism and the place of dissent in Irish society.

Mayday, Mayday! Newspaper Framing Anti-globalisers!
A critical analysis of the Irish Independent's anticipatory coverage of the 'Day of the Welcomes' demonstrations.

This article is primarily concerned with media coverage of protest. In particular, it interrogates the print media's role in the transmission of ideologically charged representations of social movement activism. Critical media theorists have long recognised that newspapers exceed 'professional' standards of objectivity and impede the free-exchange of ideas by moving into the realm of comment or opinion, by framing arguments and actors in discriminatory ways, or by disregarding worthy contributions to public debate (Couldry, 1999; Eldridge, 1995; Fairclough, 1989; Gitlin, 1980; Halloran et al, 1970; Louw 2001, Philo, 1995). For the majority of news consumers mainstream outlets continue to be the first point of contact – perhaps sole point of contact – for accounts of protest activity. Perhaps, as Crossley (2002; 138) suggests, 'only some movements, some of the time' are disadvantaged by such coverage and ostensibly negative publicity may actually raise a movement's profile, thus rallying new supporters. Alternatively, hostile, trivialising or partial coverage may reduce protesters' credibility in the eyes of non-participants, particularly when media fixate upon the character of participants rather than on the substance of their arguments (Couldry, 1999; Gitlin, 1980; Halloran et al, 1970; Ketchum, 2004; Philo, G et al 1995; Watkins, 2001).

This article offers a critical commentary on the discursive construction of protest that occurred in the pages of the Irish Independent during April 2004. I analyse the Irish Independent's anticipatory coverage of the 'Day of the Welcomes' demonstrations in order to highlight how the newspaper became a partisan participant in this debate about Europe. Its partiality was expressed through straightforward reportage, evocative headlines and a distinctive lexicon that simultaneously demonised the *potential* conduct of 'anti-globalisation' activists and fetishised a law and order agenda. However, because the Irish Independent's discourses explicitly endorsed a neo-liberal construction of economic development, EU expansionism and the social-role of culture, they also, by implication, negatively framed the discourses of 'anti' or 'critical' globalism. Historically the Irish Independent has shown a strong hostility to socialist or left-wing opinion (O'Donnell, 1945). This article shows that in the lead-up to the 'Day of the Welcomes' the ideological thrust of the newspaper's coverage justified its continued reputation as a mouthpiece of establishment discourses.

Background

In January 2004 Ireland assumed the presidency of the European Union for a six-month term of office that coincided with the accession of ten new member states. At the flag raising ceremony to initiate the presidency, Taoiseach Bertie Ahern promised that EU enlargement would be marked on May 1st by 'a major event to welcome our old friends and new partners' (Ahern, 01-01-04). Addressing the European Parliament on January 14th Ahern dedicated his tenure to the principles of partnership and consensus; '[W]e have chosen Europeans Working Together as the theme of our Presidency'. Again he hailed the forthcoming accession of new states and framing it as a cultural rather than political occasion emphasized its festive character: 'We plan to make this a real community welcome in Ireland. Community cultural events are being organised and real local involvement and international exchange will occur' (Ahern, 14-01-04). This celebratory intent was underlined with accession day's renaming as 'The Day of the Welcomes'. The EU summit in Dublin would be complemented by a selection of performances and creative processes taking place in the capital and ten regional centres (www.eu2004.ie). Partnering each regional centre with an accession state, the Irish government hoped that a broad cross-section of the public would engage with, and would consequently validate, the processes of EU enlargement. Because, Shore (2000) argues, political and economic negotiations typically occur beyond direct popular control, EU elites must discursively construct and market a positive image of a People's Europe. 'Culture' is the primary vehicle through which this image is transmitted and shared symbols such as the EU flag, Beethoven's anthemic 9th, or the 'Day of the Welcomes', express and solidify a pan-European identity.

The fragility of this identity was revealed when social movements in Ireland and internationally reconstructed the Day of the Welcomes as an opportune time for high-profile protest. To coincide with the celebrations and the accompanying summit, activists affiliated to the Dublin Grassroots Network (DGN) called a 'European Day of Action' and scheduled a weekend long menu of demonstrations (April 30th - May 3rd). In seeking to mobilize participation in the protests, DGN reclaimed accession day as a political occasion and as an opportunity for the Irish public to confront the contradictions of EU expansionism. Condemning immigration controls and the emergence of Fortress Europe, DGN asserted that,

> 'increasingly the EU is an excuse for privatisation, for shifting the burden of taxation
> onto you and for Ireland's increasing involvement in military adventures. We are
> struggling with others across Europe for a different type of Europe…' (DGN, 2004:
> np).

An alternative statement and call to action was issued by 'Another Europe is Possible' (AEIP), a 'broad based alliance' bringing 'groups and individuals together from all over the Island of Ireland to organise events during the EU presidency' (www.freewebs.com/anothereuropeispossible). Affiliates included left-wing parties such as the Socialist Workers Party, Socialist Party and Sinn Fein and individual MEPs and community activists. AEIP invited protesters to voice their opposition to EU policy at the 'May Day march against war and corporate greed' and by celebrating multiculturalism at an alternative carnival.

Aside from organizing competing events simultaneously, Government and protesters discursively framed the 'Day of the Welcomes' in contrasting ways and thus entered a contest over the meaning, relevance and justice of the European project. The rival events also signified a more fundamental disagreement about the impact of globalisation on Ireland and beyond. As opposing sides sought to mobilize citizens to endorse their arguments, they might have hoped that Irish newspapers would provide neutral and broadly inclusive platforms for the conduct of this debate. However, as the Irish Independent framed the controversy for its readers, its coverage uncritically defended the European project, presented protest as little more than a security problem, demeaned anarchist and foreign protesters and reduced 'culture' to the lowly status of money-spinner. Ultimately the newspaper sought legitimacy from and further legitimised dominant political ideologies and it invoked stereotypical frames through which the actions and aspirations of protesters might be appraised by its readership (Halloran et al, 1970).

Conservative traditions of the Irish Independent

From its launch by William Martin Murphy in 1905 the Irish Independent, with its conscious appeal to the sensibilities of the Catholic middle classes and prosperous farmers, mimicked the conservatism of the Daily Mail (Oram, 1983). Insinuating itself as the 'favourite daily of the Catholic clergy' (O'Donnell; 1945; 388) the newspaper self-censored the publication of racy or sexually suggestive stories. Through its articulation of business interests, preoccupation with a law and order agenda, close association with the bourgeois politics of Fine Gael, condemnation of trade-unionists (notoriously during the 1913 Lockout), the 1916 Rising, and the Spanish Republic, it quickly established itself as an influential mouthpiece of reactionary opinion in Ireland (Horgan, 2002; O'Donnell, 1945; O'Drisceoil, 2001). Nowadays the Irish Independent maintains its conservative reputation despite some liberalisation of its editorial line on social issues, its move towards a lifestyle focus and its more indeterminate political allegiance (Horgan, 2002). During the 1980s it predominantly situated its coverage of the 'Northern Troubles' within a simplistic 'men of violence' frame (Kelly, 1986; 420).

More recently Pollak (1999) condemned its unsympathetic and inflammatory construction of refugee related issues, and in 1997 it controversially welcomed a Fianna Fail/Progressive Democratic election victory based on the coalition's commitment to neo-liberal economic and taxation policies (Horgan, 2002).

From an initial print run of 50,000 copies, the Irish Independent's sales grew impressively (Oram, 1983) and by the outbreak of World War 2 its net daily circulation was in the region of 150,000 (O'Donnell, 1945; 391). More recent figures demonstrate that the Irish Independent remains the number one choice for weekday news consumers. The newspaper, now available in both broadsheet and tabloid editions, had a combined net (daily) circulation of 181,080 at the close of June 2004. This was significantly greater than that of its nearest Irish owned broadsheet competitor, the Irish Times - net circulation 116,009 for the same period (ABC, 2005; 4). The Irish Independent's market domination is bolstered by its affiliation to an international media power, Independent News Media (INM). INM's chief executive is (sir) AJ O'Reilly, the former CEO of Heinz who was in 2004 Chair of Eircom, the incumbent telecommunications operator in Ireland. INM has a global corporate presence as market leading newspaper publisher in New Zealand, Ireland, South Africa, and market leader regional publisher in Australia and India (http://www.independentnewsmedia.com/corp.htm).

Since INM also has controlling interests in the Star, Sunday Independent, Evening Herald, Sunday World, a range of local and regional newspapers, and significant shareholdings in the Sunday Tribune (Tovey and Share, 2003; 431), its claim to be 'Ireland's largest media company' (http://www.independentnewsmedia.com/corp.htm) is compelling. Its increasingly monopolistic status within the trade generates ongoing concern, with commentators fearing for diversity of ownership and inclusivity of opinion (Rapple. 1997; Horgan, 2002). Suspicions that the Irish newspaper industry may not nurture discursive pluralism are underscored when we consider the general character of newspaper values and journalism. Corcoran's (2004) research indicates that although Irish daily papers are rarely overtly party-political, centre-right politics dominate with only the Irish Times classifiable as a 'liberal' organ. Her study also demonstrates that journalists themselves are aware that minority or dissident discourses are poorly served in the pages of their newspapers (Corcoran, 2004). In this context, 'anti-globalisation' or dissident activists face a dual challenge; firstly to negotiate access for alternative discourses into what is a narrowly circumscribed sphere of debate; secondly to create their own media outlets and thus contest the Irish Independent's overall dominance of the newspaper field.

Theoretical influences and their application

Critical media scholars recognise that there is never a single or uniform public discourse on any political or social issue (Couldry, 1999; Fairclough, 1989, 1999; Eldridge, 1995; Gamson and Modigliani, 1989; Ketchum, 2004; Philo et al, 1995; Van Dijk, 1993, 1998). Instead researchers should think in terms of *multiple discourses* that can inflect, oppose, complement and undermine each other as they do battle for public approval. An 'issue culture' that is characterized by contestation and controversy is thus created (and within that culture individual discourses differ in their capacity to secure a broadly accepted or dominant status. Established patterns of power or privilege, related to factors such as class, gender, ethnicity or authority, mediate access to and influence over public opinion. Inequality is therefore self-perpetuating, although not always crudely or mechanically, because the 'unique access' of elites to public discourse guarantees superior and more numerous opportunities for participation in the 'discursive management of the public mind' (Van Dijk, 1993; 290).

In Ireland the 'Day of the Welcomes' represented an opportunity for various interest groups, including critics of capitalist globalisation, to discursively frame the processes of EU integration. In the following pages I analyse how the Irish Independent mediated those conflicting discourses by evaluating its representation of official and activist perspectives on the Mayday events. This qualitative study draws on the twenty two articles published in April 2004 – the month preceding the 'Day of the Welcomes' - that carried information and predictions regarding the prospective character of the 'celebration/protest'. Those articles therefore constitute the Irish Independent's 'anticipatory narrative' (Watkins, 2001). In highlighting the thrust and tone of that narrative, I suggest that although the newspaper might not have decisively determined readers' expectations of the protests or their attitudes towards the politics of 'anti-globalisation', it restricted the parameters within which those opinions and attitudes were formulated.

This article is based on a comparatively small corpus of data. Sacrificing breadth for depth of analysis may reduce the appeal of this study for readers interested in a more general review of the politics of media representation in Ireland. Nonetheless, a limited yet systematic analysis such as is practised here may facilitate a more nuanced understanding of an individual newspaper's ideological functioning. Watkins' (2001) research into US coverage of the 'Million Man March' reveals how the mainstream media's anticipatory narrative hyped up the impending demonstration yet also depoliticised it by fixating on the idiosyncrasies of leading activist Louis Farrakhan. Enraptured by an allegedly deviant personality, media coverage simultaneously disregarded and discredited the diversity of anti-racist

discourses expressed by the broad mass of African-American participants. Louw (2001; 159-160) argues that when news media 'set' the agenda of public debate, 'discursive dominance has as much (and possibly more) to do with what information is left out, as what is disseminated' (see also Eldridge, 1995; Halloran et al, 1970). For Fairclough (1989) ideology is most pernicious when it masquerades as common sense. Media texts rarely 'spout ideology' coarsely or consciously; instead they offer cues through which particular interpretations of the social world are naturalized and rationalized. Among those media cues are lexical choices that impute negative and positive evaluations, headlines that orient readers towards distinctive understandings of issues and stereotypes that reinforce existing patterns of inequality (Eldridge, 1995; Teo, 2000). Focussing on the outcomes of discursive production as it occurred at the Irish Independent, this article identifies five distinct and recurring themes that permeated the newspaper's coverage of this public controversy. In the following pages I analyse the Irish Independent's treatment of those themes, exploring how its coverage resonated with dominant ideologies. This analysis is less concerned with what is 'going on' inside the text itself than with contextualising and explaining its broader political relevance (Van Dijk, 2006). As the Irish Independent proposed unambiguous or 'common sense' positions on controversial issues, it typically failed to acknowledge the validity of alternative viewpoints – specifically those of 'anti-globalisation' groupings.

Theme 1 – The Consensus Imperative

Ireland acceded to the EU presidency in the wake of two constitutional referenda relating to the ongoing project of EU enlargement. Following the Irish electorate's initial rejection of the Nice amendment of 2001, the government re-ran the referendum in 2002 with a more assertive and ultimately successful 'Yes' campaign. Pro-Nice discourses sought to obviate the re-emergence of euro-scepticism by constructing the referendum in feel-good terms; as an opportunity for voters to share the privileges of EU membership with citizens of aspirant states. Welcoming the 'yes' vote in 2002, Bertie Ahern commented,

> 'Our decision shows we remain strongly committed to the European Union, that we
> fully realize and accept that what is good for the people of Europe is good for the people
> of Ireland…we want to welcome the peoples of the applicant countries into the Union
> with open hearts as well as open minds (Ahern, 20-10-02).

This language of consensus was revived at the unveiling of the Irish EU presidency when the Taoiseach (Ahern, 01-01-04) again solicited popular approval for enlargement; the 'Union is testimony to the fact that people prosper when they put their differences aside and focus on what unites them'.

Ahern's emphasis on unity reflects the overwhelming dominance of consensus values within Irish political discourses. In the field of industrial relations, Employer/Trade Union conflict has been sublimated in the name of mutual advantage with the institutionalisation of corporatism in the policy making sphere. It is now widely agreed that the promise of industrial peace, secured through a succession of partnership agreements, created optimal conditions for the emergence of the Celtic Tiger (Allen, 2000; Kirby 2002 for critical discussions). O'Carroll (2002) argues that the hegemonisation of this corporatist paradigm both reveals and reinforces a more general antipathy to the public practice of dissent within mainstream media and political circles. In this climate, consensus is fetishised as an objective in its own right and the democratic value of difference is denied in order to 'get everyone round the table', so that the '*one* right path' can be chosen (O'Carroll, 2002; 17).   This logic of consensus strongly underpinned the Irish government's discursive construction of the 'Day of the Welcomes' and the Irish Independent's coverage of the event.   By uncritically endorsing a celebration/party frame, the newspaper bracketed the controversial aspects of European integration and recast EU membership in non-divisive apolitical terms.

The mass media is the key source of information about the EU for the majority of European citizens (Oberhuber et al, 2005; 229). However, in the month directly preceding the Day of the Welcomes the Irish Independent carried no dedicated analysis of the political or social implications of EU enlargement, despite one editorial describing it as 'the most significant development [in Europe] since World War Two' (April 19[th).]   In failing to acknowledge, much less comprehensively debate, the contradictions highlighted by groups such as DGN or AEIP, the newspaper effectively framed the EU in non-political terms. Instead its coverage focused on the two most superficial aspects of the accession process, the merry-making planned for Dublin and provincial towns and the high-scale security operation. Reports consistently invoked terms such as 'party', 'fiestas', 'celebrations' and 'festivities' to define the authoritative character of the Day of the Welcomes. 'A cultural explosion of music, dance and art is set to sweep the country during the celebrations' (April 13th) gushed one report, while upbeat headlines such as 'Fireworks to ensure Euro parties start with a bang (April 29th)' or 'Woolly jumpers: sheep and skydivers to welcome leaders' (April 30th) prefaced articles that uncritically reproduced the government line on Mayday. The caption 'Czech out the cead mile Malta for the new EU 10' (April 13th) cleverly integrated the Irish language expression for 'welcome' with the names of two accession states, thus reinforcing the theme of consensus and co-operation. It also openly invited readers to join the weekend's revels, an invitation reiterated by the garda representative who explained that 'the weekend should be a time for celebration and the gardai would like people to enjoy it (April 29th).

> Ireland is perhaps the best example of a Member State that has, over the course of its membership, achieved full economic convergence from a position on accession of 60% of the EU's average GDP per capita. That success could not have been achieved without EU membership (Ahern, 24/01/04).

Ahern's explicit endorsement of the EU's contribution to Irish 'modernisation' was echoed in an Irish Independent editorial that welcomed the political project of European unification, although in a somewhat competitive spirit.

> 'It worked for us. And we must be careful not to let our own position slip. We welcome our new partners in Europe. We wish them well. But we must never forget that they will be rivals as well as friends' (April 19th).

Certain that Ireland is a 'role model' for new EU members, the piece also recommended that accession states follow 'in our footsteps' towards modernisation and development through the liberalisation of their economies and the creation of a pro-investment environment (April 19th). This editorial constitutes a prime example of what Colin Coulter (2003; 10-11) has dubbed 'hagiographies of the Celtic Tiger', orthodox and inherently ideological appraisals of Ireland's economic miracle that credit 'fiscal prudence' and reductions in public spending with creating the conditions vital for growth. The Irish Independent's faith in neo-liberalism Irish style informed its conviction that similar policies should be applied in new member states: 'The competitive environment these moves produced was the fertile soil in which jobs have grown', a 'lesson' that has been 'been eagerly absorbed in the new member states' (April 19th). In predicating its enthusiasm for the accession process on the universalisation of market principles, the Irish Independent also explicitly positioned itself against the kinds of values being expressed by DGN and AEIP campaigners.

Theme 2 – Culture in Service of the Economy

According to the Irish Independent (April 13th) the Day of the Welcomes presented an opportunity to 'showcase cultural aspects of Ireland, as well as the qualities of our new European neighbours'. In contemporary Ireland mainstream culture is so closely embedded with and within the value frame of neo-liberal capitalism, 'either as a means of production or as a means of consumption' that, as Peillon (2002; 52) observes, the 'possibility of a critical stance is suppressed, or more simply, not entertained or even imagined'. On the Day of the Welcomes cultural activity was given a platform in order to bolster the illusion of social consensus, contribute to national development objectives and legitimate the project of European cohesion. Arts and Tourism Minister John O'Donoghue acknowledged the symbiotic relationship between this cultural project and longer-term economic imperatives when on

May 4th he pronounced the celebrations a 'great success'.

> 'It was particularly gratifying to see so many representatives of the new Europe at festivities around the country. It is through these new friendships and this initial exploration of each other's culture that our own regional tourism industry and the tourism industries of these ten new potential holiday destinations will be enriched'

At the Irish Independent, journalists were equally cognisant of culture's economic utility and appraised the weekend festivities as follows;

> 'From Friday to Monday, Ireland will be centre stage in Europe, and in the words of the Defence Forces' Chief of Staff, Lieutenant-General Jim Sreenan: "A successful May Day would be very good for the country in terms of tourism and inward investment and it would be a great blow to us if it went off the rails."' (April 27th)

Likewise, on April 30th Helen Bruce explained how community solidarity, voluntary effort and creativity had been marshalled in the interests of Ireland's development agenda.

> 'North to South, East to West, thousands of people have worked hard in a genuine attempt to *welcome the newcomers* into our lives and our *economies* this weekend' (My italics, April 30th).

O'Mahony and Schafer (2005) have diagnosed the Irish government and media's predisposition to evaluate cultural, social and scientific developments from the confines of a narrow frame of economic rationality, a tendency that is clearly discernible in the above citations. Furthermore, because Euro elites favour uncontroversial, 'liberal and politically neutral' platforms for cultural expression (Andersen, 2003; 17), the complex question of difference within and between member states is answered via reified images of distinguishing or idiosyncratic cultural practices. Therefore when Irish Independent journalist, Helen Bruce (April 30th) wrote, '[W]hat could better sum up this country, and the joys of the established European Union, than a basketball match in Kilkenny, a go-kart display in Waterford and a knitting demonstration in Cork?', the sanitising function of this cultural event was made more explicit.

If this was an opportunity for Ireland to bask in the glory of international attention, there was in the Irish Independent's coverage a discernible anxiety that our image might be tarnished by protests. Expressing that view explicitly was the headline, 'For four days we're centre stage – and we can't afford to blow it' (April 27th). Reinforcing it were news pieces such as April 13th's that empathized with the fears of a government minister:

> '[Minister O'Donoghue] said it was vital that the event went well and the accession of the 10 new EU states was celebrated in *a fitting* manner, given that 'the eyes of the new

European order, if not the world, would be on Ireland.' (My Italics)

The newspaper's framing of the protest 'threat', acknowledged - inadvertently perhaps - the shaky foundations of Irish development warning that 'any instigated trouble could ruin Ireland's carefully nurtured international reputation at the high point of our European presidency' (April 13th). Implicit in these comments is what O'Seaghdha (2002; 159) has called 'the provincial anxiety to be well thought of in the metropolis', reflecting the fact that Ireland's extraordinary economic growth has been strongly reliant on international markets and foreign direct investment (O'Hearne; 2003). Therefore, while the journalists at the Irish Independent heralded Ireland as a formidable example to new EU members, readers were also reminded that in many ways ours is dependent modern status.

Theme 3 – Disregarding the Culture of Protest

In positing May 1st as 'Day of the Welcomes', the Irish government and EU reconstructed the day's significance in a way that was at variance with international socialist and social movement discourses. May Day already has widely understood symbolic *and* political meanings; as a traditional Celtic/Pagan festival (Bealtaine), as the Catholic feast day of St Joseph the Worker and, since the 19th Century, as the day most associated with both celebratory and confrontational manifestations of labour solidarity. Eric Hobsbawm (1985; 285) has charted the left's appropriation and internationalization of May Day as a 'highly charged festival and rite', originally focused around workers' demands for an eight hour day but subsequently adapting to reflect the specific political aspirations of local and national labour movements.   May Day's politics is overtly expressed through the organizational input and high visibility of the movements and parties of the left. The day also performs a social role insofar as it allows 'workers' to generate and articulate a 'consciousness of their existence as a separate class' (Hobsbawm, 1985; 286). This consciousness or solidarity is expressed through cultural symbols such as flowers, flags, banners and bands. In recent years anti-capitalist activists – such as Reclaim the Streets - have attempted to regenerate and extend May Day's leftist credentials by organising mass mobilisations and direct actions with varying degrees of success on that date (Aufheben, 2002; Harman; 2000).   However, Hobsbawm (1985) also recognises that mainstream political and cultural forces have sought to co-opt the countervailing traditions of May Day, claiming that the 'EEC' (sic) did precisely that when designating May Day an official labour holiday.

Of the 22 articles related to the controversy that were published in the newspaper during April 2004, 15 carried headlines that framed the impending protests as a menace to the order, safety and good humour of Dublin. Teo (2000) argues that because news consumers often fail to read beyond them, headlines significantly influence how readers frame public controversies. The semantic association of

protest with chaos in the Irish Independent's headlines was underscored by distinctive and provocative lexical choices;

'Mayhem alert for May Day' (April 1st)

'Security forces primed for May Day protests' (April 13th)

'Razor wire fitted at Farmleigh to deter May 1 protesters' (April 17th)

'Lockdown looms on city streets' (April 29th)

'Violent protest group targets 'shutdown city' for weekend' (April 29th)

'Water canons ready for May Day – Gardai are being trained to combat street riots on day of celebration'

'Gardai, protesters gear up for showdown on May Day'(April 19th)

'7,500 army and gardai stand by as minister quells anxiety' (April 30th)

In this highly charged anticipatory narrative, the Irish Independent prophesised a battle fought between binary opposites, the forces of law and order on one side and the forces of disorder on the other. As readers were invited to adopt the subject positions of the security forces, or at least the security conscious, repeated discussions of the scale of the policing operation emphasised the gravity of the impending 'crisis'.

'GARDAI are being trained in the use of water cannons, which will be key weapons in the force's armoury against rioters attempting to mar the May Day EU celebrations in Dublin' (April 20th)

'equipment to cope with street violence will be supplemented by two water cannons on loan to the gardai from the Police Service of Northern Ireland (April 27th)

'Gardai are now on high alert in the run-up to the May Day weekend with 5,000 gardai and 2,500 soldiers rostered on duty in the city over the coming days, as well as the Army Bomb Disposal Unit and the Naval Service' (April 30th)

The privileged coverage afforded to the security as opposed to the political significance of May Day can be interpreted as an example of discourse operating as 'dissimulation' (Thompson, 1990). According to Thompson (1990, 61-63) 'dissimulation' refers to those instances when ideology serves to conceal, obscure or deflect attention from relations of domination. Irish Independent discourses, in their selection and framing of news reports, paid scant attention to the political controversies and social contradictions precipitating protest against the EU. Nor did they acknowledge much less seek to interrogate the symbolic resonance of May Day demonstrations for the left. Instead the newspaper redirected readers towards the surface manifestations of conflict, possible street violence. This

'violent protester' stereotype has had an important place in media representations of protest (Halloran et al, 1970), discrediting both social movement objectives and their mode of expression. As the Irish Independent hyped the prospective violence, it presented a narrative of cause and effect that rationalised the mobilisation of police powers against citizens. The threat posed by protesters was most melodramatically contextualised on April 27th, when the spectre of international terrorism was invoked.

> 'Since September 11 and the more recent Madrid bombings, the threat posed by groups linked to the al-Qa'ida terror network cannot be dismissed. And although Ireland is not high on the list of likely targets, an international event which brings together the heads of 25 European countries must hold some attraction for bombers and *all the possible threats* must be taken into account.' (My Italics, April 27th)

Theme 4 – Discrediting 'Anti-globalisation'

Although the terms 'anti-globalisation' or 'anti-capitalism' are contested (Aufheben, 2000; Bircham and Charlton, 2001; Hardt and Negri 2000; Harman, 2000; Starr, 2000), in mainstream media discourses they have become shorthand and unifying representations for a range of dissenting political positions. In Ireland a burgeoning 'anti-globalisation movement' has problematised a range of issues including the politics of development, corporate power, privatisation of services and the enclosure of public space. In 2002 an indigenous Reclaim the Streets protest/party in central Dublin generated considerable media attention, primarily because violent scenes occurred when police used force in their attempts to control the proceedings. The Irish Independent's (May 7th 2002) front-page report on that demonstration carried the heading 'Anti-capitalist protest ends in street battles'. In April 2004 as the Irish Independent warned readers of the threat posed by the May Day protests culpability for the 'imminent' violence was attributed to a broad sweep of so-called anti-globalisers. Articles referred to, 'anti-globalisation and anti-US protests' (April 13th), 'a 'Padded Bloc' to resist police' (April, 19th), 'concern in Government that anti-globalisation protesters are intent on wrecking Dublin in May' (April 13th) and 'squatters' (April 30th).

In his seminal work 'The Whole World is Watching' Gitlin (1980) explores the dialectics of media coverage from an activist perspective. If media coverage offers counter-hegemonic discourses the promise of notoriety, publicity and broader 'social attention' it also carries the threat of 'reification and judgment' (1980; 246). So it was with the Irish Independent's May Day coverage. In two articles entitled 'Gardai and government accused of creating 'climate of fear' for May Day' (April 9th) and 'Weekend protest party from a rainbow of opinions' (April 30th), journalists moved beyond the crude

anti-globalisation label to list the diverse political affiliations of protesters and to publish a timetable of their activities; valuable coverage in Ireland's highest circulation 'quality' weekday paper. In the former piece, high-profile activists attempted to rebut accusations of violence. Nonetheless, the Irish Independent's sole attempt to present a 'detailed' analysis of the discourses of anti-globalisation was overtly hostile in tone and reductionist in content. In an article entitled, 'Seeing through the rhetoric of the anti-globalisers' (April 28th), Ian O'Donnell claimed that;

> 'if the anti-globalisers ever get their way and actually drive companies like Nike out of the developing world, that part of the world will have to be given a new name because it will have stopped developing once and for all. … it is the very people the anti-globalisers say they wish to help, namely the poor, who would be, and indeed are, their pre-eminent victims'.

From the earliest stages of its May Day coverage the Irish Independent questioned the appropriateness of anti-globalisation protest on this auspicious occasion. Although the protests coincided with an international political summit and interrogated EU policies, an article on April 1st approvingly quoted an 'anti-terrorist chief' who claimed that the 'Dublin celebrations are very different to Genoa and have no globalisation connections but these people seem intent on causing trouble here'.

On April 30th a report entitled 'Here's how the Poles prevent trouble at anti-globalisation protests' briefly mentioned the social justice motives of protesters, alluding to participation by 'laid-off miners forced to dig coal out of illegal makeshift pits'. Nonetheless, the article ultimately bolstered the dominant frame of anti-globalisation as security problem, suggesting that without a heavy police presence, such events would not be peaceful.

> 'POLAND'S security services deployed hundreds of police in full riot gear, water cannon were at the ready tucked away in side streets and helicopters clattered overhead.
>
> So it's probably no surprise that a march involving thousands of anti-globalisation demonstrators through central Warsaw yesterday went off peacefully'

If the cumulative impact of the Irish Independent discourses was to cast anti-globalisers as 'troublemakers and violent agitators' (April 27th), readers were also encouraged to perceive the aggression as pre-planned and executed with military precision. Significantly, security correspondent Tom Brady filed many of the relevant articles and the most common informants were gardai or security force spokespeople. An article warning that 'agitators had already been in the country on

reconnaissance missions' (April 29th) followed claims by 'overseas intelligence' – no more definitive source was named – on April 20th 'that troublemakers intended to target Dublin for well-organised street protests'. On April 17th the necessity for pre-emptive measures by the army was underlined by yet another conflation of protest with terrorism:

> 'Army engineers took delivery of the wire …in preparation for massive security measures being put in place to protect EU heads of state from protesters or terrorist attacks'.

Aside from attributing sinister motives to anti-globalisers, the above citations also pre-emptively exonerated the gardai from accusations of heavy-handedness such as were levelled after the 2002 'Reclaim the Streets' debacle. As Tom Brady explained on April 28th, 'the Garda Representative Association are seeking an assurance from Justice Minister Michael McDowell that they will not be scapegoated if the May Day protests at the weekend descend into a riot'.

Theme 5 - Demonising Outsiders

The publication of competing calls for protest on the Day of the Welcomes reflected tensions within Irish anti-globalisation specifically and the international movement generally. A putative 'socialist/anarchist dichotomy' (Chesters and Welsh; 2004; 321) relating to tactical expression, organisation and political aspiration has been diagnosed at mobilisations including Seattle 1999, Prague S26 and in Genoa. In a movement characterised by diversity there is a race to discursively capture and express its true spirit. 'Liberal' commentators have been accused of diluting the conflictual agenda of anti-globalisation in favour of a fluffier political message and of contributing to the demonisation of anarchists, particularly those who endorse violence against property (Aufheben, 2002; Lemisch, 2000). Efforts to impose a unifying hegemony on the movement are also indicative of anarchism's traditionally negative public image, whereby stereotypes such as the 'dangerous mad bomber' or 'clueless young punk' abound (Owens and Palmer, 2003; 335). The (anarchist) Irish Workers Solidarity Movement has humorously deconstructed its own experiences of negative publicity where mainstream discourses pose the 'anarchist infiltrator' as a symbol of violent extremism.

> '2003 was a vintage year for the anarchist bogeyman. He could be counted upon to appear whenever public discontent reared its ugly head. Thankfully, our politicians and media were eternally vigilant to the threat that he posed and were able to spot his plots and warn the easily-led 'ordinary person' to steer clear of him and his ilk' (Feeny, 2004; 1).

Stereotypical images of anarchists are discernible in the Irish Independent's May Day coverage.

Significantly when protesters were given the opportunity to answer critics, the spokespeople profiled came from the AEIP grouping rather than the anarchist oriented DGN. The article on Polish anti-globalisation (April 30th) claimed that 'black-clad, long haired anarchists predominated' while on April 13th a report on the cancellation of a rock concert scheduled to mark accession day invoked the familiar 'anarchist infiltrators' trope. On April 19th the newspaper referred to Indymedia as 'an anarchist group' and used the sinister term 'intelligence' when describing its publicly accessible and openly shared postings. Even when the word 'anarchism' was not actually used, the Irish Independent negatively framed anarchist activism. On April 1st, Tom Brady informed readers that

> 'Many of the organisers of the protests were involved in the May Day clashes that resulted in violence on Dublin streets in 2002 and in last year's anti-war confrontations with gardai in Shannon and in the capital'.

This is a reference to direct actions staged by Reclaim the Streets and Grassroots Network Against War, groups with strong anarchist associations. On April 30th a report claimed that the arrest of three UK nationals and police searches of Dublin squats had links to well known anarchists, the 'Wombles'; 'raids on a number of unoccupied homes and flats in Dublin have recovered protective padding, spray paint, 'Womble' stencils and bleach'.

Given the Irish Independent's endorsement of European integration, it is ironic that its coverage of the protests consistently represented other Europeans in disparaging and menacing terms. Under the headline 'Mobile agitators head for May Day protests' (April 27th), Tom Brady warned readers that 'up to a hundred troublemakers are targeting Dublin for street confrontations during the May Day weekend'. This claim was based on 'intelligence reports' from 'police in Britain and mainland Europe' (April 27th). By April 29th the apparent threat had amplified – both rhetorically and visually - with reports that a 'HARDCORE group of up to 300 international troublemakers is planning to target Dublin at the weekend', their purpose 'to cause mayhem'. For journalists at the Irish Independent, it was not only the malevolent intentions of the 'international brigade' (April 20th) that prompted alarm, but also their duplicitous tactics. Allegedly, 'International agitators operate by attempting to provoke gardai into confrontation and then blame them for causing violence' (April 28th).

Witness here what Thompson (1990; 60) terms 'expurgation of the other', where discourse works to classify and demonise the alien, in this case the non-Irish protester, and so fragment a potential counter-hegemonic movement. An inflammatory article published on April 30th openly pitted guileless or peaceful Irish protesters against the outsiders,

'While thousands of people are expected to take to the street to mount peaceful protests, it is feared that the events will be hijacked by a hardcore of 300 extremist international protesters intent on causing disturbance and violent disorder'.

In effect the newspaper might be judged to have hedged its bets somewhat, acknowledging a possible measure of popular support for protests, but simultaneously claiming that mischievous minorities would upend legitimate intentions.

'[T]his group has featured prominently in street violence in other European cities in the recent past and, usually, its members operate by infiltrating peaceful protest movements and attempting to remain anonymous until they are near a potential flashpoint' (May 27th).

The theme of infiltration, also invoked to isolate anarchists, was resurrected in a xenophobic construction of European and UK protesters. Given that the EU seeks to encourage the free transit of citizens between member countries, the Irish Independent's position seems all the more incongruous.

Conclusion

On April 27th Irish Independent journalist JS Doyle listed some of the competing events scheduled for the May holiday, informing readers that,

'It all sounds like good harmless fun, and there is no indication that any of these events, demonstrations and protests will be anything other than peaceful. However, there is a degree of over-excitement in some quarters. The Garda Representative Association newsletter has warned of "mindless thuggery" from protesters who plan to "usurp" the EU's big day. There is talk in certain newspapers of gangs of violent anarchists flocking to Dublin to cause trouble.'

Superficially at least, Doyle's article restored a measure of balance to the Irish Independent's partisan coverage. As well as generating potentially useful publicity for the demonstrations, it also ridiculed the law and order frenzy that had typified print media coverage.

"We'll gas Bertie" was the supposed quote from somebody in the Irish *Sun*; the same paper that warned that anarchists were threatening to release "enough gas to kill 10,000 Dubliners"

Doyle thus acknowledged the invidious role of those newspapers: exaggerating expectations of mayhem and demonising protesters. His comments reflected on the conduct of tabloids such as 'the Sun' and the newspaper he ironically dubbed the 'venerable upholder of liberal

standards'.

> 'Last Sunday's Irish edition of the *Observer* carried on its front page a report
> from its "Ireland editor" that the centre of Dublin will be transformed into "a
> virtual fortress" for next weekend's summit.'

Interestingly 'other' newspapers – incidentally both British owned - are accused of partial and inaccurate reporting, but there is no admission of the Irish Independent's own role in constructing and reinforcing the dominant anticipatory narrative.

The occasion of the Day of the Welcomes, signifying the high water mark of the Irish Presidency and the accession of new states, might have initiated a national conversation about the costs and benefits of EU membership. As the highest circulation daily in the Irish Republic, the Irish Independent was ideally placed to stimulate and provide a forum for that conversation. Instead, grim prophesies of violence displaced political debate as the focus of coverage. European integration was framed in spectacular terms – appropriately a party but problematically a potential riot – rather than an ongoing and controversial set of economic and political processes. Articles actively encouraged citizens to participate in the weekend's events as audiences, cultural ambassadors or welcoming hosts: in effect, the newspaper urged passive and uncritical endorsement of the European project.   Its coverage also constructed that participation in instrumental terms. Apparently, the May Day celebrations should judged according to their economic legacy – tourism, inward investment and the enhanced reputation of a modern and ambitious country. In both tone and content the Irish Independent replicated official discourses on the Day of the Welcomes.   As the Taoiseach, government ministers, garda representatives, journalists and security correspondents presented a seamless and authoritative vision for the weekend, alternative or dissenting visions were ruled offside. According to the dominant anticipatory narrative, protest would shame the nation and spoil the 'people's' fun.

Norman Fairclough (1999; 75) argues that in contemporary society the discourses of global capitalism hold particular sway and that 'people's lives are increasingly shaped by representations which are produced elsewhere'.   Those discourses constitute a permanent backdrop against which the 'common sense' of economics and politics is constructed; a common sense that seems all the more compelling now that global capitalism transcends citizen and state regulation. Commentators (Coulter, 2003; O'Carroll, 2002; O'Seaghdha, 2002; Peillon, 2002) observe how a narrowly circumscribed concept of economic rationality dominates the Irish public sphere, serving as the first, and often, only basis for evaluating social, cultural and political affairs. As they proclaimed the incontestable virtues of competition, economic growth and reduced public spending (April 19th) Irish Independent reports

invoked this hegemonic frame. Furthermore, because the newspaper constructed Euro-enthusiasm and neo-liberalism in populist terms as 'the' common sense, this discursive space was closed off to opposing or even more substantive argumentation. Significantly, reports did not consider at length or actively rebut alternative political positions. Instead the ideological thrust of the Irish Independent's coverage was underscored by repeated inferences and innuendo regarding the dangerous and alien character of protesters. Ominous headlines and a provocative lexicon were invoked to expose the 'others'– anarchists, foreign activists and anti-globalisers – in our midst. The newspaper thus marginalised and discredited protesters and, more fundamentally, protest itself as violent, subversive and unpatriotic.

In the lead up to the Day of the Welcomes activists were acutely sensitive to their negative portrayal in mainstream media discourses and at Irish Indymedia (www.indymedia.ie) activist-contributors repeatedly condemned the hysterical headlines and disparaging commentaries to which they were subjected. Critical media theorists (Gitlin, 1980; Ketchum, 2004; Halloran et al, 1970) recognise that 'publicity' is a poor substitute for 'public debate', if social movements secure notoriety rather than political advancement in the pages of mainstream newspapers.   In this instance, protesters infiltrated the dominant media frame, but as deviants not credible actors. Protesters were afforded a limited right of reply, i.e. to defend themselves against the charges of violence that the newspaper had pre-emptively laid against them. On the Indymedia website and through their own newspapers, networks and circulars, activists from DGN and the AEIP attempted to cultivate an alternative public sphere, within which diverse perspectives on Europe might be exchanged. Therefore, we cannot assume that the Irish Independent, or indeed other mainstream media outlets, conclusively determined the Irish people's expectations of the Day of the Welcomes. It is probable, however, that the Irish Independent's status as market leading newspaper, enhanced the common sense appeal of its partisan construction of the events that were to follow.

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Community Development: a Critical Analysis of its 'Keywords' and Values
Rosie Meade

Introduction

This chapter does not evaluate the real life failures and successes of the many different community organisations currently active in Ireland. Nor does it offer a general diagnosis of the health of community development: what it can or cannot do for social policy; its status a la the state, the market or the 'people'; what's hot and what's not in terms of practice methods or issues on the ground. Instead this chapter is preoccupied with some of community development's 'Keywords' (Williams, 1983), by which I mean those concepts and values that are invoked in order to cultivate, legitimate and advance its public image. Community development is a curiously polygamous idea. It is coupled with the most beguiling and worthy concepts in the English language; democracy, participation and empowerment; in relationships that are often represented as rock solid, regardless of what is actually happening on the ground. This chapter starts from the premise that community development *can* generate actions, initiatives and opportunities that challenge oppressive or unequal social relationships, but that it does not always or inevitably do so. If there is progressive potential, then there are also countervailing tendencies: community development that is politically pragmatic, manipulative of or irrelevant to people's needs. You could put this down to the inevitable gap between theory and practice, the strong probability that we academics begin our analysis with inflated

and abstracted expectations that could never be realised in the cold hard reality of the field. Theory or social science thus appears to be a useless encumbrance, adding nothing, devaluing everything.

While there is a real risk of overstatement with it comes to community work, the problem is more suggestive of a theoretical deficit than theoretical surfeit. Firstly, terminology and theory are not the same. Simply juxtaposing community development with highly suggestive 'keywords' offers little in the way of detailed understanding or analytical depth, and the pretence of definitional clarity deflects important questions about those words. As Raymond Williams (1983: 16) explains, those questions are not 'only about meaning; in most cases, inevitably, they are about *meanings*' (my italics): plural, disputed and evasive *meanings*. This chapter focuses on the 'keywords', or as they are more usually described, 'core values' of *process*, *participation* and *empowerment*. It emphasises and demonstrates that their meanings are fundamentally contested, that they can be co-opted for contradictory political ends and that ultimately, rather than guiding values they are obscure scratches on community development's moral compass.

Secondly, critical sociological analysis destabilises certainties, unearths relations of domination and illuminates the connections between the personal and the public, the local and the global. It also helps us to trace the limits and intersections of 'out there' structures and 'in here' agency. For community activists and workers, this knowledge is useful, not as set of alternative truth claims, but as an intellectual armoury that protects against the ideological onslaughts of political, business, academic, media, and community leaders. Furthermore, theory helps us to clarify our intentions and maybe even our methods. For example, to claim that communities need empowerment demands a nuanced analysis of the different dimensions and forms of power, a consideration of what power communities already have and recognition of how and why vested interests may resist meaningful change. With his emphasis on 'praxis', Paolo Freire (1972a; 1972b) reminds us that social enquiry and social action are mutually rewarding, that they should never be detached and that both are central to the purpose of community work. I believe that community development's value base is an appropriate focus for such enquiry and this article draws on useful sociological concepts and literature in order to explore its dialectical potential.

Community Work or Community Development?

The first step in any critical analysis of the discourse and values of community development is to clarify what it is we are talking about, a more challenging task than it initially seems. Some textbooks represent *community work* as *the* generic term, incorporating a range of approaches or models, among which can be found, *community development*, *social planning*, *community education, feminist community work* and *community action* (Dominelli, 2006; Popple, 1995; Twelvetrees, 1991). Here community development signifies a distinctive praxis – i.e. its core values and modus operandi are recognisably different from those applied in alternative models of community work. In other instances the terms *community work* and *community development* appear to be synonymous (Commins, 1985; O'Cinneide and Walsh, 1990), and community development itself is represented as a potentially variegated field of practice.

Keith Popple (1995: 65-66) typifies the Community Action model as 'conflict' and 'direct action' oriented, whereby groups contest the limitations, excesses or misadventures of state and market intervention in their communities. The 'Shell to Sea' campaign in Mayo, might serve as a contemporary example. In contrast with what he terms community action's 'radical' or 'socialist approaches' (Popple, 1995: 72), community development is concerned with self-help in neighbourhood contexts and is more consensus orientated. Rather than fight the power groups attempt to become players in the broader field of power relations, perhaps through involvement in local state-partnership structures. Patrick Commins (1985: 166-168), distinguishes a 'classical model' of Irish community development, emphasising community as a 'harmonious entity' and where issues 'are reconcilable in the "common good"', from a social/community action model that adopts a structural analysis of inequality. Chris Curtin and Tony Varley (1995) have used a somewhat looser but complementary categorisation to differentiate 'integrationist' from 'oppositional' tendencies in Irish community action. Whatever their preferred terminology, authors agree that community based activism and interventions take a variety of organisational forms, are oriented towards a diversity of social outcomes and are led by a complex range and combination of actors. Furthermore, activity is underpinned by contrasting political claims and expectations; whether in terms of the composition and role of the community, or in terms of that community's relationships with the state, market, mainstream political processes, and other sites of power (Commins, 1985; Dominelli, 2006; Ife, 2002; O'Cinneide and Walsh, 1990; Popple, 1995; Powell and Geoghegan, 2004; Twelvetrees, 1991).

This chapter uses the concepts of community work and community development interchangeably, partly for convenience and partly because I am unconvinced that this field can or should be carved up in to precise or definitive models. Firstly, since the 1990s a consensus driven conception of community development has become hegemonic in Ireland and Britain (Forde, this volume; Meade, 2005; Popple, 2005; Shaw, 2006). This is neither to deny the possibility or actuality of dissent and resistance on the ground, rather it is to recognise the current marginal status of protest strategies in 'mainstreamed' community work. By mainstreamed I refer to community development that is core-funded, and in some cases initiated, by the state. Furthermore, a rigid classification of models may be of limited utility in the practice context, not least because of its potential to reify what are, to use the sociological parlance, 'ideal types'. Within the Weberian social scientific tradition, ideal types are academic constructs rather than descriptions of reality; they 'portray in heightened, indeed sometimes caricatured, form characteristic social relationships' (Callinicos, 2007b: 157) so that those relationships might be more easily subject to academic analysis or comparison. By emphasising too strongly the distinctiveness of particular models, we are liable to forget that community work is probably messier or more contradictory in practice. Ultimately, the boundaries between approaches are permeable. Groups may oscillate between oppositional and conciliatory tactics or they might adopt different organisational structures at particular points in their history. Community education or community care strategies may be subsumed within the work plans of an individual community development project. Depending on the issues or crises that emerge in communities, projects may shift from advocacy, to service provision, to information giving and back again.

Despite its fungibility, community development boasts a disparate range of advocates and supporters, including Shell Nigeria, the World Bank, the WK Kellogg Foundation, New Labour, former Taoiseach Bertie Ahern, the Combat Poverty Agency[11] and a host of locality based and identity groupings in Ireland. Among state and non-governmental organisations, it has become official short hand for a more participatory and socially inclusive approach to planning (Department of Social Community and Family Affairs, 2000). It is credited with offering, potential solutions to the most entrenched problems of Irish society: racism,

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[11] The Combat Poverty Agency has since 1986 been centrally involved in the measurement of poverty in Ireland. As a state body it has played a significant role in supporting and celebrating anti-poverty work; in particular acting as a strong advocate for community development. In summer 2008 its future seems uncertain as Mary Hanafin, Minister at the Department of Social and Family Affairs is reported as 'giving strong indications that she wants to abolish the organisation' (Irish Examiner, July 28th, 2008)

inequalities in health, criminality, poverty and social atomisation. Fusing two of the most desired, yet elusive goals of contemporary living, our hankering after community and our insatiable pursuit of development, it links the best bits of traditional life to the promise of the modern. When it presents past and future in perfect symmetry, who could be 'against community development'? And what is the alternative? Barbarism, unbridled individualism and the death-knell for all that is social.

It is precisely because it is so universally popular that we need to be on our guard when community development is invoked. For one thing, it trades on our longstanding but nonetheless problematic affection for 'community'; a concept that magically confers democratic properties upon all words paired with it. As the US based political scientist and left-wing activist Adolph Reed Jr (2000: 10) has observed,

> [A]ssertion of links to, roots in, messages from, or the wisdom of the "the community" is more of a way to end a conversation about politics than to begin one. It is often the big trump in a game of one-upmanship, an attempt to validate one's position or self by alleging privileged connection to the well-spring of authenticity, to preempt or curtail dissent by invoking the authority of that unassailable, primordial source of legitimacy.

In this volume Hilary Tovey explores the sociological claims and counterclaims surrounding the idea of community. The concept of development deserves equally rigorous assessment. Theorists including Gustavo Esteva (1992) and Arturo Escobar (1992; 1995) argue that development is an 'ideology'; that we must learn to deconstruct the truth-claims and value judgments that it masks. When US President Truman launched the 'era of development' in 1949, progress came to be understood internationally as uni-directional, evolutionary, with all roads leading towards the standards of consumption, growth and wastefulness normalised by the 'modern' countries of the West. New scientific practices of development were invented - along with an associated lingua franca - that were framed as neutral, expert led and rational (Escobar, 1995; Esteva, 1992). Economic and cultural inequalities were redefined in technical terms, as glitches in the machine that could be repaired without any significant reordering of overarching systems of power and domination.

The Irish state's discursive commitment to community development and more recently to sustainable development implies that it is willing to accommodate diverse and pluralized perspectives on the best way forward for its citizens. But, in my view, a rigidly economistic vision of development still dominates the public sphere. It is articulated through the actions

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and pronouncements of government, and elevated to the status of *the* truth in mainstream newspapers. Just think how regularly the bottom line of money and jobs is invoked to disparage alternative visions; be they May Day protesters in Dublin or community activists in Mayo (Meade, 2008; Rossport 5, 2006). As O'Dalaigh (2006: 144) wryly observes with reference to the ongoing dispute over the location of the motorway in the Tara/Screen Valley, ours is a public culture that finds 'scholars dismissed as tree huggers, environmental scientists damned as romantics'. This is because a genuinely open conversation about development demands searching questions about the role and legitimacy of the state's own actions, and those of the business and corporate sectors. It may even elicit troubling questions about the cohesiveness and democracy of communities themselves.

The Progressive Values of Community Development

Notwithstanding the academic ruminations about what to call or how best to define community development, there is general agreement that it is underpinned by a socially progressive value base. A recent draft document 'Standards for Quality Community Work' (2007) circulated by the Community Workers Co-op (www.cwc.ie) notes that 'community work is rooted in a set of core values' (2007: 13) that are the basis of its 'unique purpose and perspective' (2007; 13). Those values include *collectivity*, *empowerment*, *social justice*, *equality* and *anti-discrimination*, *participation*, *integrity* and *competence*. Fred Powell and Martin Geoghegan's (2004) research suggests that 'humanistic' and 'liberal' values strongly influence the practice of community organisations in Ireland. Writing in Australia, Jim Ife (2002: 269-70) rejects technocratic accounts of community work that construct it as a neutral or politically disinterested practice; inevitably it embodies the values of 'community itself,' 'democracy, participation, self-determination'. In 2004 a gathering of policy makers, researchers, academics and practitioners endorsed what has become known as the Budapest Declaration on 'Building European civil society through community development'. A vision of how community development might be supported by EU and national governments, it identified priorities in terms of research, training, sustainable development, justice and economic growth. It also explicitly referenced community development's 'core values/social principles' as 'covering human rights, social inclusion, equality and respect for diversity' (http://www.iacdglobal.org).

Accepting that community development is value driven, that people's intentions impact on their worlds, means recognising that social change is not delivered from on high through the intercession of governments or great leaders alone. Nor is change crudely determined by the onward march of historical or economic forces. With regard to the perennial debate about the sociological significance of structure and agency, community development comes down on the side of agency: that we can – and must - *actively* and *knowingly* participate in the construction of social reality. By coming together in communities, by purposefully interacting, negotiating and endlessly making demands, we can fundamentally shape the texture and content of our political, cultural and social lives. To find evidence of this agency we must reinterpret what might otherwise appear to be local or mundane experiences. For example, the building of a community resource centre is significant not only for the physical act of construction, the suitability of its design or for the services it provides, but also potentially for the new visions of possibility that it engenders. It may transform relationships between neighbours, lead to a renegotiation of roles between communities and state agencies, challenge the norm of private ownership by expanding communal or public space, and it may generate a new spirit of efficacy among those who work towards its completion. All of this can be seen as desirable social change, microscopic perhaps, but real in its consequences for particular communities. It can also be seen as public enactment of the kind of values to which community development lays claim. If similar kinds of collective agency are unleashed in other places, among other groups, micro experiments in community development might merge to become national, even international, movements for change.

Except, of course, for the fact that they might not. We should not get too carried away with either the promise of our own agency or our conviction that values can change the world. In 'The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte', Karl Marx (trans 1973: 146), warned that '[M]en make their own history, but not of their own free will; not under circumstances they themselves have chosen, but under the given and inherited circumstances with which they are directly confronted'. Community workers and activists practise in complex political, economic and cultural contexts, where local, national and global forces intersect and interact. Their actions are shaped, and often constrained, by new trends in social policy, legislation, the availability of funding and resources, community power dynamics, moral panics, unforeseen crises or the waxing and waning of voluntary effort. Because communities are rarely homogenous and most community development projects are answerable to a range of what are increasingly referred to as stakeholders, pragmatism, rather than values, may be the final

determinant of outcomes. Moreover, the State plays a decisive role in defining community development's character. Mae Shaw (2006: np) distinguishes between 'provided/invited spaces' and 'claimed/demanded spaces' as sites of practice (see also Forde and McInerney this volume). She argues that priorities are predominantly defined in relation to issues, structures and policies determined by government – the 'invited spaces'. 'Demanded spaces', where communities call the shots with reference to their own values are all too rare by comparison.

When community development activists or workers identify their values, they engage in a process of reflexivity - a kind of 'rational "monitoring" of their own conduct' (Giddens, 1995: 235) – whereby they admit to the aspirations and assumptions that underpin their actions. They also seek to demonstrate the 'uniqueness' of community development, how it differs from social work, for example, because it is concerned more with the autonomous organisation of people than it is with intervention in their private lives or with working on them. There is, however, a fundamental and irresolvable paradox in these claims of uniqueness. Alan Twelvetrees (1991: 15) finds that the 'uniqueness of community work derives from a value system which emphasises the importance of people discovering what they want to do, doing it, and not having it imposed on them.' Surely then, we must allow for the possibility that people will pursue agendas that are out of step with other putative community work values. To assume that communities will ultimately act in honourable or mutually beneficial ways is to be guilty of populism. In some, obviously extreme, cases exploitative or abusive employment practices, financial irregularity, corruption, nepotism, and unreasonable demands, are the realities of community development irrespective of the high-minded claims that groups insert in their mission statements. In the 1970s, Jo Freeman's classic feminist text *The Tyranny of Structurelessness* (c.1972), railed against the tendency of activist groups to give lip service to progressive values. She argued that once named, values were frequently abandoned; the inevitable consequences being frustration, cynicism, power struggles, burnout and new unaccountable forms of hierarchy.

The problems with values are more apparent when we take an internationalist and historical perspective. Marj Mayo (1975) has demonstrated how in the early to mid decades of the 20th Century the UK Colonial Office actively promoted community development as a bulwark against anti-colonialist movements in the British Empire. Reminiscent of the *Killing Home Rule with Kindness* approach that had been adopted in Ireland this was effectively a last-ditch strategy to stave off or, at the very least, to shape the post-colonial futures of the emergent

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nations.   In a similar vein, James Midgley (1986: 18) notes that during the 1950s and 1960s US Aid programmes provided significant ideological and financial resources to community development programmes in 'Third World' countries, most notably Thailand and Vietnam, in order to 'contain subversive influences'. This was community development in anti-communist mode. More recently Liam Kane (2006) has criticised the World Bank's peddling of a neo-liberal friendly model of community development in the Global South. In urban USA, Randy Stoecker (2003) finds the dominant model of community development, typically delivered through Community Development Corporations (CDCs), to be pragmatic; largely focused on building construction, a narrowly framed model of economic development and the gentrification of poor neighbourhoods. On both sides of the Atlantic, Bush and Blair have lauded and increased public expenditure on faith-based community development initiatives, through the 'White House Faith Based and Community Initiative' for example, thus raising serious concerns about the comparative influence of religious and secular values in community work.

> [W]hat are espoused as 'community development values' are more truthfully a rather muddled accretion of well-intentioned and often passionately held aspirations drawn from its rather disparate and complex provenance. (Shaw, 2006: np)

It is difficult to reconcile the idea of community development as an organic expression of popular expectation with an insistence that it has an *a priori* value system. This chapter suggests that we treat community development's values with a fair degree of scepticism. This does not mean dispensing with optimism or denying any role for community development in the making of a better society. We should recognise, however, that the discourse of community development *can* be dishonoured by its practice. It also invites a more profound enquiry; whether it is merely in the application of that discourse or in its very construction that the roots of those anomalies lie.

Locating the Importance of Process

'[T]he community development approach is generally described as an educational *process* through which communities achieve personal and social change' (Shaw, 2006: np, my italics). Here 'process' suggests a singular concern with the *means* by which development is to be achieved: an admission that the building of active and socially engaged communities requires

slow and deliberate steps. Where people feel isolated, fearful, apathetic or deskilled, it is a task in itself to mobilise the collective will and spirit of optimism that community development demands[12]. It is a further challenge to find some grounds for consensus regarding mutually beneficially actions, particularly where conflict or distrust bubble below the surface of daily encounters. In a sense workers and activists must become evangelists for community development, and when the pace of change is slow or tedious, it is often the most modest indicators of personal growth or new found assertiveness that become the hooks on which more long term commitment is secured.

For Margaret Ledwith, the community development process begins with 'listening, valuing and understanding people's particular experiences' (Ledwith, 2005: 32). Across the literature, this core idea is repeated; that local wisdom has its own inherent value but that it is also the raw material for more sustainable and effective public policy (Ife, 2002; Twelvetrees, 1991; Wates, 2000). Even when state agencies, outside NGOs or established interest groups initiate community development, it is underwritten by the populist claim that ultimately it will and should be owned by the people. For example the Department of Community Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (2005: 2), claims its role is 'to provide support to communities in the most appropriate way as they work to shape their own futures, address their common goals and achieve their full potential'. However, in order to make the transition from objects to subjects of development, community members may be judged as needing 'capacity building'; the refining of skills, knowledge, values and attitudes so that they are better equipped to participate in the processes of change. Consequently, community workers often devote considerable time to management training, group work and introductory courses in community development. The underlying assumption is that community development requires community development and that ultimately it begets more community development; method and outcomes are indistinguishable in a process without end.

The sanctity of the process is moderated by projects' actual dependency on state funding for their material welfare. They operate in a policy context whereby increasingly ambitious claims are made about community development's capacity to respond to and resolve social contradictions. It is commonly assumed that community organisations will serve as a conduit

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[12] In using the term community worker, I do not necessarily suggest that this worker is either paid or a 'professional'. I am referring instead to any individuals – activists, volunteers, paid workers – who attempt to activate and support community organisation based on a conscious commitment to the improvement of those communities. Dilemmas associated with professionalization of community development are discussed by Seamus Bane in this volume.

for ordinary citizens to shape public policy. However, policy making is a highly complex business, with political and institutional factors each playing their part and with power formations often disguised or indistinguishable (Hill, 2005). Furthermore, because projects' greatest achievements generally occur in the more amorphous and localised zones of capacity building, they may find it easier to articulate successes and failures in qualitative rather than quantitative terms (Lee, 2006; Motherway, 2006). Nonetheless, accountability and budgeting conventions typically stipulate the kind of hard and incontrovertible data that demonstrates efficient use of taxpayers' money; e.g. services provided, working groups established, courses organised or matching funds raised. The timeframes within which projects return annual reports or develop strategic plans are usually determined centrally and can be out of sync with the needs and pace of community living. More ominously, the state may construct accountability in punitive terms. In Spring 2003, a quite positive evaluation of the Community Development Programme[13] that had been commissioned by the Department of Community Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, was followed by a controversial suspension of the Department's commitment to tri-annual funding of projects. In an exercise that seemed primarily concerned with tightening the Department's control over the programme, a 'review' of the CDP was instituted. Projects were plunged into a period of uncertainty regarding their futures, as they were required to resubmit their work plans in line with the new funding regime. Although, business as usual has been restored, this episode serves as salutary reminder of how the state may use its power arbitrarily to override the processes of community development (Meade, 2005).

Community development's privileging of 'process' reflects the influence of Paolo Freire's concept of 'critical pedagogy': 'a democratic process of education that takes place in community groups and forms the basis of transformation' (Ledwith, 2005: 95). Recognising that oppression is sustained through the interaction of coercion from above and consent from below, Freire (1972a; 1972b) was concerned with how the 'oppressed' might develop the kind of consciousness that permits ruthless critique of things as they are, yet also nurtures the imagination of alternatives. His was a radical vision of a society transformed, where education ceases to service dominant economic and social relations, becoming recast as 'cultural action for freedom'. The role of the

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[13] The Community Development Programme is core funded by the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (2003; 4) and it is, perhaps, the most high profile and extensive programme of community development in the history of the southern Irish state. According to the Department, projects are 'designed to mobilize the capacity of disadvantaged communities to participate in mainstream local development, training, education and employment opportunities'.

worker/activist/educator is to create spaces for and bring momentum to dialogues that allow the issues, fears and aspirations of communities to be laid bare. This role demands problem posers not problem solvers: asking why, how and where to next. It also requires new forms of leadership that are founded upon an unequivocal commitment to radical change, but that are not doctrinaire about the route to achieving it.

Henry Giroux (2000) argues that Freire's ideas are often applied in superficial ways, and thus he reveals some of the risks posed by the fetishisation of process. Freire championed more participatory educational methods, emphasising interaction over didactic instruction, deconstructing the hidden hierarchies of the classroom. So, it can look as if we are following his intellectual lead when we purposefully democratise the spaces in which we work. Arranging the chairs in a circle, faithfully committing all opinions to the flip chart, discussing issues in detail, ensuring that everyone has their say, these are typical aspects of day to day community work. Stephen Duncombe (2007: 171) explains the concept of pre-figurative politics, where 'the vision of the future is prefigured in the practices of the present, thereby erasing the distinction between mean and ends'. In other words, if community development means working towards the creation of a more discursive, open and respectful society, why not start as we mean to go on by, quite literally, practising change in the resource centre or the community forum. Often though, the process stops there. Giroux (2002) reminds us that Freire wanted to radically reframe education's social role by asserting its place in the battle against oppression: a battle that calls us to recognise that society is conflict ridden and requires us to confront the roots of injustice. When Freire's methods are detached from their revolutionary purpose, his vision of the educational or community work process is reduced to feel-good encounter sessions. Even if we do not accept that community development has a higher calling in terms of social transformation, the absence of tangible outcomes can be demoralising. If people get involved because they lack services, jobs, or facilities, there is probably a limit to how long they will be buoyed along by a process. 'Things' need to change, not just feelings or mindsets but 'things as they are' in the real worlds of community and society, otherwise momentum is lost and solidarity dissolves.

The Limits of Participation
Perhaps more than any other value, community development stands for participation. This can mean that otherwise disengaged individuals become actively involved in the management of projects or at the very least that they are consulted about the course of development as it impacts

on their daily lives. It can, however, mean much more; that citizens begin to play a more central role in the definition of public policy. Here participation is orientated towards local, national and, increasingly, global sites of influence and decision making. It may involve making better use of the structures and processes of liberal democracy, running as candidates in elections or getting the vote out in support of community campaigns. Going even further, it might signal a richer and broader conception of democracy itself.

Liberal democracy is a compromise between individual liberty, political participation and state control, based on the assumption that the masses must be allowed speak, but only through carefully managed processes and at clearly defined times.   Effectively it offers democracy 'lite'. Elections are crude instruments for accessing popular opinion, particularly in light of deficiencies in voter registration, a general trend towards reduced voter turnout, albeit one reversed in the most recent Irish general election, and declining membership of political parties (see Hughes et al, 2007).   Rhetorically we accept that democracy is government of the people, for the people, by the people; calls for participation concentrate our attention on the final fragment of that hackneyed phrase asking what else can 'by the people' mean. They ask us to envision and create a participatory democracy, the kind of society in which 'all collective decisions involve active participation by some of the people that they effect and nearly everyone participates in some of the decisions that affect them' (Baker et al, 2004: 99).

In Ireland and internationally, social movements and community groups have attempted to renegotiate the terms of really existing democracy, in order to move towards such a participatory vision (see also McInerney this volume). The Community Workers Co-op had framed its own involvement in national social partnership as a form of participative democracy, one that allowed it and the other social partners 'to enter discussions with government on a range of social and economic issues and to reach a consensus on policy' (http://www.cwc.ie/work/sp.html). The World Social Forum, an international gathering of civil society organisations and social movements, has since 2001 converged on Porte Alegre and other regions, in order to explore and demand new configurations of democracy (Mestrum, 2004). Its charter of principles 'upholds respect for Human Rights, the practices of real democracy, participatory democracy' and 'peaceful relations, in equality and solidarity' (WSF, 2002: np).   The Irish Government has also joined the chorus. Drawing inspiration from developments in the EU Commission, its White Paper 'Supporting Voluntary Activity' (2000: 14) endorsed the concept of active citizenship, meaning the 'active role of people, communities

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and voluntary organisations in decision-making which directly affects them'. It further agreed that 'the concept of formal citizenship and democratic society' must be extended to incorporate direct forms of 'participation' and 'responsibility'. Of course, we should be wary of the political expediency and cynicism that is masked by the rhetoric of active citizenship. As Zygmunt Bauman (2007:145-146) has witheringly observed with reference to Britain, government discourses on 'responsible' communities define new 'sites where the problems abandoned by the 'great society' can be 'tackled in cottage industry mode' thus allowing the state to disengage from public provision.

Obviously the implications of participatory democracy are far reaching. The political landscape could be transformed by the creation of new forums for negotiation and decision-making and, ultimately, through the erosion of the centrality and status of the parliamentary system (for interesting critiques, see O'Cinneide, 1998/99; Furedi, www.geser.net/furedi.html,). This vision requires the equalisation of access to economic, social and cultural resources, the absence of which skews political influence towards already privileged groups (Baker et al. 2004; Hughes et al, 2007). In the current political climate, however, egalitarian politics has lost its lustre. Nancy Fraser (2000; 2003) observes that, with the global ascendance of the neo-liberal paradigm, political interest in the contentious idea of economic redistribution has been decentred and diluted (see also Treacy this volume). Justice is now framed primarily in terms of 'recognition', whereby minority or oppressed groups seek visibility and respect for their cultural identities and pursue 'participatory parity' in political life (Fraser, 2000; 2003). Often these are vital struggles, not only for the well-being of those minorities, but also for the health of democracy itself. For example, in Ireland the ritual demonisation of Travellers and Traveller culture has real material consequences; impacting negatively on their health, welfare and social standing (see Lentin and McVeigh, 2006). By challenging dominant ideologies of sendentarism and possessive individualism and by confronting institutionalised forms of oppression, Travellers' demands for recognition invigorate the broader struggle for equality on this island   However, if community development's politics is reduced solely to questions of recognition, if our sensitivity to cultural or social inequality is shorn of an awareness of economics[14] – and specifically neo-liberal

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[14] According to the Equality Authority (www.equality.ie) '[T]he Employment Equality Act, 1998 and the Equal Status Act, 2000 outlaw discrimination in employment, vocational training, advertising, collective agreements, the provision of goods and services and other opportunities to which the public generally have access on nine distinct grounds. These are: gender; marital status; family status; age; disability; race; sexual orientation;

economics - how it liberates some but constrains most, then opportunities for genuine participatory parity will be diminished.[15]

Some community development organisations have made the leap to broader political participation through their membership of the 'social pillar' in national partnership negotiations. By securing a place at the table, and effectively forcing the state to concede that many groupings - including women, Travellers, young people, the poor - were inadequately represented by mainstream political parties or the other partners, the social pillar won a significant victory in terms of official recognition.   The community sector has used the processes and forums of social partnership to challenge dominant representations of minority communities and to lobby for progressive reforms. Whether these achievements amount to a new era of 'participatory democracy' is dubious, especially since the state has abdicated little in the way of real influence to the social pillar (see Forde this volume, also Kirby, 2002, Meade, 2005, Meade and O'Donovan, 2002, Murphy, 2002). Youth, community and voluntary sector organisations, are widely regarded as junior partners who lack the muscle of both the employer and trade union sectors. Furthermore, the social pillar organisations are not unanimous in their commitment to partnership or in their estimation of its usefulness.   Individual members are ambivalent about the effort, compromises and lost opportunities for protest that participation entails (Meade, 2005; Murphy, 2002).   Finally, social partnership is a highly institutionalised process of decision-making. It engages a select group of negotiators from organisations that have been picked by the government not freely chosen by the majority of citizens. Irrespective of the progressive and insightful contributions of those involved, partnership is insufficiently transparent, accountable and broad based to constitute a genuinely participatory model of democratic life.

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religious belief; and membership of the Traveller Community'. Notably class and economic status do not feature as grounds for discrimination and exclusion.

[15] The primacy of economic and material considerations in the Irish policy making sphere has been crudely illustrated by recent proposals to merge the state's key equality bodies; The Equality Tribunal, National Disability Authority, Equality Authority, Irish Human Rights Commission and the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner.   According to the Irish Times (De Breadun, 20/08/2008) the plans have been criticised by Labour Party spokesman on Human Rights, Joe Costello; "It now seems that the tightened Exchequer situation is going to be used to neuter organisations like the Human Rights Commission and the Equality Authority that have been critical of the Government," he said'.

Aside from its democratising potential, participation may address other, more existential needs. In recent years, a range of sociological, philosophical and popularising texts have diagnosed profound levels of alienation within contemporary Western society. Among the most famous is possibly the US best seller, 'Bowling Alone' (2000; also Putnam et al, 2003) in which Robert Putnam records the decline of active-community in the USA. He explains that citizens have retreated into privatised realms of TV viewing, travelling by car or workplace ambition, thus sacrificing the social networks, bonds of trust and norms of reciprocity that otherwise give life meaning. His book demonstrates that human interaction and connectivity – or in a phrase 'social capital' – significantly enhances health, wealth and happiness, while their absence generates tremendous costs in terms of criminality, suspicion and social breakdown.

There is much that is vague and analytically lightweight about this discussion of social capital (see Navarro, 2002; Mowbray, 2005; Smyth and Kulynych, 2002). Problematically, it is underwritten by a benign view of market and state. Putnam fails to interrogate how the political and economic structures of advanced capitalism have contributed to the processes of atomisation and alienation that he describes. Nonetheless, his work is notable because it encapsulates a mood of popular disquiet regarding modernisation's collateral damage. In Ireland, it has informed the public statements of former Taosieach Bertie Ahern, the research agenda of the National Economic and Social Forum (2003) and the establishment of a government Task Force on Active Citizenship in 2006[16]. Discussions on social capital tend to focus on two questions: how can we maintain and extend existing levels of voluntary action *and* how can we re-energise a 'spirit' of community, so that trust and neighbourliness are once again normalised in Ireland. Participation, it seems, builds community and community builds participation. If we are to reveal and evaluate community participation's ultimate purpose, we need to raise some additional questions. What vision of power, and power relations, is participation expected to serve? Can all interests and agendas be reconciled so that everyone participates as equals? How can we distinguish the healthy and unhealthy, the acceptable and unacceptable forms of participation? And finally, who makes those distinctions and in doing so whose interests do they serve?

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[16] Interestingly the report of the Task Force suggested that there is no obvious decline in rates of volunteering but that voting trends should give more cause for concern. It did also acknowledge the difficulty in measuring qualitative experiences of community life. Its report suggested that it is these dimensions of social capital that give most concern.

Empowering the Concept of Empowerment

Empowerment still has some radical cachet. The concept is rooted in Freire's educational philosophy and the progressive discourses of the New Social Movements (Cleaver, 2001). Empowerment implies that community development is an inherently political process with an inherently political purpose (see CWC, 2007, Ife, 2002; Ledwith, 2005; Lee, 2006, for definitions). It promises that community power can be unleashed and redistributed, that social relationships will be reconfigured in favour of the poor or dispossessed. Unfortunately, overuse has left the concept almost threadbare. Marketeers and the market, government and international governmental organisations have appropriated the word, effectively erasing its unsettling connotations of power, inequality and politics. Adolph Reed Jr (2000: 116) dismisses it as a 'negative keyword' representing everything from 'self-help psychobabble to bootstrap alternatives to public action, to vague evocations of political mobilisation'. Now it serves 'technical' and 'project-dictated imperatives' in the fields of local and international development (Cleaver, 2001: 37) or as a byword for individualised voyages of self-discovery that have no broader political or public importance.

Maybe there is a case for abandoning empowerment to its fate, for using better or more robust concepts to define the purpose of community work. Maybe it is possible to reclaim the concept for the left, to anchor it more securely in discourses of solidarity, democracy and equality. Either way, an analysis of power must remain central to the theory and practice of community development. Of course this in itself is no easy task, because 'power' is a much contested sociological concept (see Crossley, 2005) and there are ongoing debates regarding the primacy of conflict or consensus approaches; whether power is 'something' that others have 'over' us and at our expense or an inexhaustible resource that can service all social interests simultaneously. Marxist and Weberian sociologists typically adopt the former construction, with the latter, somewhat benign understanding, associated with the functionalism of Talcott Parsons (see Giddens, 1995).

Saul Alinsky, the infamous community organiser from Chicago, was a committed advocate of the conflict perspective on power. As a self-styled political realist, he believed the world to be 'an arena of power politics' (1971/1989: 12) that communities must get down and dirty in the battle for influence. He argued that community workers 'must rub raw the resentments of the people of the community; fan the latent hostilities of many of the people to the point of overt expression' (1971/1989: 116). To contemporary readers, these might seem brazen and alarming

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sentiments, particularly in Ireland, where partnership and consensus approaches to community development are elevated above all others. Scenes from Bellnaboy in Mayo, where activists resist the combined forces of Gardai, Shell and Government in order to renegotiate the terms of the Corrib Gas Project, remind us that vital undercurrents of opposition still survive in this country (see Rossport 5, 2006). In contrast, mainstream or state-resourced community development organisations may fear – with some legitimacy - that resistance or confrontation will provoke a backlash from authorities, endanger future funding or diminish public approval.

In 2007, then Minister for Justice Brian Lenihan asked Department officials to report on the conduct of Travellers' Rights organisation Pavee Point in supporting a group of Roma who camped on a roundabout on the M50 (Lally and Healy, 2007). His comments suggested that government is less than tolerant of the social justice demands of community organisations, even when they are not framed in overtly conflictual terms. Justifying his intervention, he is reported as saying,

> If their [Pavee Point's] involvement was simply to provide humanitarian assistance
> to these individuals, then I do understand their position. But if their position was
> that these individuals should be permitted to stay here and that we should set aside
> the whole immigration law of the State, and have a back-door entry policy, then
> that would be wrong. (Lenihan in Lally and Healy, 2007: np)

Given that the Irish government poses as friend and enabler of community development organisations (DSCFA, 2000), this is an extraordinary statement. The Minister suggests that organisations should stick to service provision – note the echo of charity in his reference to 'humanitarian assistance' - that matters of policy or procedure pertaining to the immigration system are beyond their ken. Furthermore, his statement reveals the hierarchical nature of state/community relationships, a hierarchy that is often obscured by the dominant rhetoric of consensus. He therefore sends out a pre-emptive warning to community groups that might otherwise seek to defy or re-imagine the unwritten codes of their relationships with the state.

If we accept that power is a capacity for action or a resource that is shared unequally, then we need to consider how power is divided out and used in communities. The classic 'Community Power Debate' (Crossley, 2005; Gaventa, 1980; Lukes, 1974; 2005) focused on these questions with particular reference to political life in the USA. Pluralist contributors asserted that the public sphere was relatively open and responsive to a wide range of interests, while critics such

as Stephen Lukes (1974; 2005) portrayed more insidious and subtle expressions of power that bolstered the fortunes of dominant social groups.   A detailed discussion of the terms of this debate is beyond the scope of this chapter but collectively its chief disputants produced a three-dimensional conceptualisation of power that still is of great relevance for our analysis of Irish community development.

The first dimension of power is revealed when we get our 'opponents' to do things they would otherwise not do; they concede to our might and act against their interests. A community organisation that is battling the County Council over the location of a dump might, due to the force of its counterargument or its recourse to legal measures, convince its opponents to drop their plans. Empowerment in this instance involves mobilising local people and resources to fight for the cause; a cause that is presumed to have some hope of success in a relatively pluralistic political system. The second dimension of power relates to the parameters of public debate, how some issues are ignored, deemed non-negotiable or rendered invisible, despite their serious implications for minority or disadvantaged groups. It calls into question the pluralism of the political, social and cultural spheres and draws our attention to a 'behind the scenes' operation of power that reinforces existing hierarchies. As Bacharach and Baratz (1962: 948) explain, power holders or elites protect their own interests or world view by devoting their energies 'to creating or reinforcing social and political values and institutional practices that limit the scope of the political process to the public consideration of only those issues which are comparatively innocuous'.

For arts activists who are committed to a multi-dimensional conception of cultural democracy that embraces participation in the consumption, production and distribution of the arts, this second-dimension of power is an ongoing site of struggle. Declan McGonagle (2007: 425) former director of the Irish Museum of Modern Art, argues that community arts, such as is practised in or by community development projects, is generally perceived as occupying a 'marginal' status in 'the culture' of Ireland; disregarded or disrespected as second rate by mainstream cultural commentators and institutions. Established selection and validation procedures ensure that most museums and galleries neither engage with these artforms nor with the communities that make them. McGonagle (2007: 426), therefore, asserts that '[D]evelopment requires a connection to power but to redistribute and to refocus that power, not to destroy it', and so activists must contest and remake the institutional, policy and cultural processes that define what art is and what it is not.

The third dimension reflects what Lukes (1974: 23) calls 'the supreme exercise of power'. There are strong parallels between this theorisation of power, and those of Paolo Freire (1972a) and Antonio Gramsci (Trans 1971), insofar as all three emphasise the distorting effects of ideology on the behaviour of ordinary people. Complex and unseen, power robs us of insight into our objective circumstances; we interpret the world through false or alien frames of reference and our compliance to the status quo is secured as dominant interests control our 'thoughts and desires' (Lukes, 1974: 23). In other words, many communities appear to have real and legitimate reasons for protest but their apparent apathy, acquiescence or fixation with irrelevant concerns is a regular source of disappointment to politically committed activists who dream of change. Contrast the vivid and highly charged exchanges that surrounded the Roy Keane/Mick McCarthy imbroglio, with the impoverished debate associated with the Citizenship Referendum of 2004. Worse, the high level of electoral support for that constitutional amendment suggests that public opinion *was* decisively shaped by the negative constructions of migrants and migration that had been a feature of government and media discourses for almost a decade. Of course, it is both discomfiting and impolite to say that 'other people' get it wrong because they are duped by power; at the very least it invites the charge of arrogance or cultural imperialism. In the world of community development where so much emphasis is placed on the wisdom of communities and the importance of listening to people's voices, it might appear to be the ultimate betrayal of practice values. Nonetheless, Lukes's critical theorisation of power raises fundamental questions for community activists and workers who are driven by progressive political aspirations. It suggests that argumentation towards what communities don't know rather than facilitation of what they already presume may be the true vocation of the community worker. Maybe projects should attempt to mould rather than mirror community expectations. More worryingly, it implies that there may be tensions between the participatory ethos of community development and its commitment to citizen empowerment; the seamless connection between one value and the other may be more rhetorical than real.

Community groups can pursue empowerment on any or all of the three power dimensions, and in doing so they will face active, institutionalised or even unwitting resistance from established power blocks. Frances Fox Piven and Richard A Cloward (2002) remind us that even when poor people's movements win critical victories in terms of welfare, labour or social rights, that those victories can be reversed; that governments, employers or institutions can and will claw

back concessions unless they are jealously guarded[17]. Consequently, empowerment should never be classed as a technical exercise or as a deliverable that can be quantified to universal satisfaction. If groups struggle to win campaigns, to publicise their concerns outside their own communities or to rouse the masses from their willing acceptance of the status quo, they might, out of sheer frustration, conclude that they have no real power. A key problem with the 'Community Power Debate' is that it treats power as 'something' that is 'out there', a kind of end-point that signals either ultimate success or ultimate failure. There are, however, other useful ways of understanding power; approaches that treat it as relational rather than as a fixed capacity, approaches that recognise how power is negotiated continuously in all human encounters.

Although acutely conscious of oppression, Michel Foucault (1994), also emphasised that some forms of power are socially dispersed, that power is more than repressive capacity, that it is 'the means whereby all things happened' including the production of pleasure and knowledge (Giddens, 1995: 263). He recognised that power is expressed not only in the obvious arenas of decision-making, but also in everyday routines, institutional arrangements, cultural practices, and in dominant and subaltern discourses (Foucault, 1994). For example, Colin Cameron (2007) describes how the Disability Arts Movement has consciously subverted mainstream discourses about disability by representing and celebrating positive, boisterous and creative images of the disabled subject. In doing so, the Disability Arts Movements has rejected the established canon of the arts world and asserted its own power to cultivate alternative ways of being, knowing and expressing. In his analysis, interestingly, 'non' or 'anti' participation is a manifestation of power. By supporting and validating resistant forms of living, talking, organising and imagining, community groups may subvert or inflect dominant relations of power. This resistance will not by itself radically transform overall patterns of

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[17] Two examples from summer 2008 illustrate this point. The Small Firms Association has called for a decrease in the minimum wage (SFA, 15/07/2008), claiming that 'Ireland has "lost the plot" in terms of having a competitive labour market' and arguing for a €1 cut in the already paltry hourly rate. Meanwhile. Minister for Social and Family Affairs christened the recession with the inevitable 'Crackdown on Jobless Benefits Claims' (RTE, 21/07/2008); signalling the return of weekly 'signing on' for new applicants and increasing checks on the bona fides of existing recipients.

inequality or oppression, but it does at least reveal a capacity for contrariness and altered thinking that is immensely valuable in a homogenising world.

Conclusion:

Sometimes, I think that the words participation, process and empowerment could easily be replaced by a 'there, there, there now'; those vaguely encouraging noises our mammies made to calm us down when they thought we were too stirred up. Participation, process and empowerment should be meaningful concepts but all too often they are not. Often this is because the crucial responsibility of explanation is evaded when they are named as community development's values; explanation regarding what it is we might hope to achieve by pursuing them, who or what stands in their way and what are the kinds of sacrifices we might be forced to make in their honour.   It is also because community development has become all things to all people: simultaneously attractive to the international and national architects of neo-liberalism and to activists with a deeply felt commitment to egalitarian politics.

Community development groups do useful, even essential work. They provide basic services, share information about welfare and entitlements, support people who are distressed, lonely or isolated and they create much needed spaces for sociability. They show that people have potential power: power that can be expressed as resistance, outright opposition, acquiescence and co-operation. Our agency is expressed both individually *and* collectively, often through community organisations, so that we leave discernible imprints upon the social, political and cultural spheres we inhabit. Adult literacy classes, community parades or lively public meetings can enrich and improve our society. At a time when the desires of the individual consumer almost invariably trump the needs of the collectively minded citizen, community organisations that claim a value for solidarity, mutuality and creativity are actively subverting dominant cultural and political discourses.   They remind us that the 'self' is always social and so are our interests, so are our needs.

It is, however, more difficult to distinguish what kind of imprint community organisations are leaving locally, nationally and internationally, in terms of decisions made, policies followed through or progressive legislation enacted. William Gamson (1995) notes that for collective forms of action to be possible, people need to develop new 'frames' or frameworks of thinking through which we can re-appraise our worlds. Specifically, we must develop; 'injustice' frames that support the kind of moral indignation or anger that will fuel our desire for change;

'agency' frames that engender self-belief, that *our* alternatives are possible; and 'identity' frames, that position our 'we' in opposition to a 'they' who 'have different interests or values' (Gamson, 1995: 90). In contemporary Ireland, the mainstream narrative of community development presents a perpetual and all encompassing we, but no they. This ideology of consensus has been institutionalised both locally and nationally, in the form of partnerships. Many community activists and development workers believe that participation in these structures and processes offers the only viable route to empowerment; therefore they are strategically, if not ontologically, committed to partnership. Often this is articulated as a 'we have no choice but to be involved'.

There are choices, however, albeit uncomfortable and potentially painful ones. The consequences of alternative choices may be a community development that is less well funded, that has less status in policy discourses or a community development that embarrasses and alienates powerful interest groups. Protest is a gamble. It brings no guarantee of success and every likelihood of reprisal, but it does at least force our attention on to the impoverished scope, form and processes of Irish political debate. It reminds us of hierarchies of access, opportunity and outcome that partnership obscures. If community organisations are determined to stick with partnership, then they must demonstrate its effectiveness with more conviction. We need to hear and read about the tangible successes they have secured through partnership: if and how it incorporates good quality and rewarding process; evidence that their participation is not merely tokenistic, but that community groups can actually win out in instances of serious controversy; that the many rather than the few are engaged; that it supports new sources of power and a new spirit of efficacy within them. Sounds like a tall order? Of course it does, because it is precisely these kinds of expectations that are raised when community development becomes associated with words such as empowerment, process and participation.

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Robert Tressell's 'The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists'

Rosie Meade

With their recent and much feted academic text '*The New Spirit of Capitalism'* Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello (2005a: 162) explore, with particular reference to contemporary France, what it is that 'justifies people's commitment to capitalism' and 'renders that commitment attractive' despite the obvious absurdity of the system itself. In the early years of the 20th Century the Irish born sign-writer Robert Noonan (1870-1911), using the pseudonym Robert Tressell, undertook a similar task. Posing as novelist rather than social researcher he described and, crucially, *explained* the miserable circumstances and political acquiescence of tradesmen in Mugsborough or as it is more commonly known, Hastings in South-East England. In this 'town of about eighty thousand inhabitants' of 'fair outward appearance', the majority 'existed in a state of perpetual poverty which in many cases bordered on destitution' (Tressell, 2004: 740-41)[18]. Tragically, his was no tale of working class heroism or defiance; instead we find a class of people so deluded and defeated that their real scorn is saved for the socialists in their midst. The abiding power of *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists* lies in its explanation of why this was and continues to be so. It offers a peerless depiction of 'Hegemony' detailing how, in the home, the workplace and throughout this Edwardian society, oppression was sustained by the interaction of coercion and consent. Tressell's narrative also anticipated and

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[18] Working class people are in Tressell's view society's real Philanthropists, hence the title, because they abandon their social, economic and political rights without due consideration of their real interests.

illustrated what would later emerge as key themes in critical social theory during the 20th and 21st centuries; the culture industry critique, false consciousness, the place of the intellectual in social struggle and, the meaning and political value of resistance.

In the following pages I try to explain why I regard *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists (TRTP)* as a classic activist text, focusing on what I consider to be its most compelling themes. Doubtless, many readers will feel little connection to either the historical setting or to the abject living conditions that it describes – in our time the anodyne phrase 'social exclusion' trumps 'poverty' in policy and public discourses. More problematically, *TRTP* can seem a demoralising read, perpetuating the kind of 'dead end' analysis found in so much sociological writing; a litany of societal flaws or shortcomings is presented but too little is said about the political organisation and strategic thinking necessary to overcome them. Although the book ends with a rousing testament to the inevitable victory of socialism – 'from these ruins was surely growing the glorious fabric of the Co-operative Commonwealth. Mankind awakening from the long night of bondage and mourning.' (Tressell, 2004: 738) – it seems at best a flight into fantasy as the content of preceding pages could only engender the opposite conclusion.

As a fan of *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists*, I cannot really pretend that it has had a profound influence over the ideas and positions adopted by Irish social movements since its publication in 1914. In Britain its political status is legendary, where by virtue of its popularity among WW2 soldiers and navy personnel it is often claimed – somewhat extravagantly - that it 'won the '45 election for Labour' (Harker, 2003: 141). Its place in the public culture is also assured; cited as the 'favourite book' of Tony Benn, Ricky Tomlinson (alias Jim Royle) and the significant numbers of readers who voted it to Number 72 in the Big Read charts of 2003[19]. Unusually it has breached the artificial gap between the political and cultural spheres, and while certainly not a mass market favourite it has won readers and listeners who might never voluntarily pick up *Das Kapital*. Noonan's singular contribution was to theorise through 'art' and to daringly presume that his kind of life and his kind of understandings might have broader resonance. Raymond Williams (1983: 251) describes the book as an enduring testament to the importance and utility of 'theory', demonstrating that 'experience alone will not teach us'. But cultural resources, be they novels, poems or songs, are also vital reservoirs of identity, hope

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[19] In 2008 BBC Radio 4 ran a three part serialisation of *TRTP* starring Johnny Vegas and, bizarrely, John Prescott MP.

and imagination, and *TRTP*, while never abandoning its commitment to story-telling, is ultimately a moral call to activism.

Robert and me

Although there is some uncertainty about his origins, it is likely that Robert Noonan was born in Dublin, the son of retired RIC man Samuel Croker and Mary/Maria Noone/Noonan (see Ball, 1979; Harker, 2003). During his late teens, Robert made his way to South Africa, via Liverpool, where he learned his trade as a painter decorator. During his time in South Africa he married and divorced Elizabeth Hartel and they had a daughter, Kathleen. He also developed the pro-Boer sympathies that may have led to his eventual deportation from the territory. Whether by choice or by force Robert and Kathleen arrived in London in 1901. It seems to have been an unhappy period in his life as the family experienced great financial hardship and poverty. They later moved to Hastings, which, somewhat ironically, was famous as a 'health resort' (Harker, 2003; 11). Despite being renowned for his considerable skill and artistry, his employment record was chequered and he was afflicted by chronic ill health – possibly the early stages of TB. It is also probable, given his strong political opinions, that he found it difficult to ingratiate himself with local employers. Robert was active in Hastings' burgeoning socialist scene and the Social Democratic Federation, contributing leaflets, manifestoes and ideas on PR strategy. His daughter Kathleen remembered him as a good natured man, yet who was frequently demoralised by the backbiting ways and absent solidarity of his fellow tradesmen (Ball, 1979; Harker, 2003). *TRTP* draws extensively on his own work life and his encounters with employers and other workers. Noonan hoped to migrate with Kathleen to Canada and travelled to Liverpool to negotiate his passage in 1910. Sadly, he died prematurely in 1911, possibly from TB, and was buried in an unmarked 'workhouse' grave. His political engagement along with his efforts to analyse the material basis of the circumstances in which he, Kathleen and his workmates lived mark him out as a true organic intellectual.

I first read a version of *TRTP* as a teenager, and much as I would love to be able to exaggerate my 'socialist from cradle to grave' credentials, it was a sentimental rather than political encounter. Re-reading it on a Mayo bound train in 1993 a man approached me exclaiming proudly, 'that's one of the most powerful books ever written' and we had a short chat about its message and Noonan's Irishness. Like my new friend, I knew little about Robert's life and his

status as 'authentic' voice of his class, but I was beginning to appreciate both the complexity and continuing relevance of his insights. Later I used the book as a teaching resource when interrogating concepts such as 'false consciousness', 'ideology' and 'oppression'. Now, as someone who considers herself a member of that pitifully small and dysfunctional family, otherwise known as the Irish Left, I get a perverse consolation from the profound and disturbing questions that *TRTP* raises about the efficacy of socialist strategy. It lays bare our political failure, forcing us to confront the question 'what the hell are we doing wrong?' Why is it that despite having a compelling analysis and people's best interests at heart, the Left seems bereft of imagination and allure (Duncombe, 2007; Reed, 2000)? Or more crudely, why in 2009, when the Irish economic miracle has 'melted into air' and when the insanity of financial speculation has been exposed, are the Dublin and Cork Mayday marches still so marginal? Populist commentators breathlessly assure us that Ireland is ready for an alternative; tragically that alternative appears to be Fine Gael.

If I am bemused and disillusioned, *TRTP* reminds me that such feelings are a kind of inevitable socialist dividend. The book's central character, Owen, lurches between conviction and despair, between pity and contempt, as he struggles to convert his co-workers to socialism. It is difficult not to empathise especially if you have ever been involved in campaigning in Ireland or even if you have just expressed a contrarian viewpoint to sceptical friends and colleagues. For me the electorate's ringing endorsement of the 2004 Citizenship Referendum was a particularly bruising encounter with democracy. Nor do the Left's tendencies towards bickering and sectarian partyism - evident for example in wrangling about the character of the anti-war campaign - help to instil a strong sense of efficacy and relevance. But because *TRTP* presents such a powerful deconstruction of alienation and its consequences, it implicitly urges us to take matters of political strategy more seriously so that we search for some path through the impasse.

A working class novel in itself and for itself

Tressell (2004: 2) claimed that his 'main object was to write a readable story full of human interest and based on the happenings of everyday life, the subject of Socialism being treated incidentally'. Centred on the worsening financial circumstances and growing despair of Frank Owen and his family, *TRTP* is a richly populated text that provides fascinating ethnographic insights into family, community and political life in Edwardian Hastings. Shifting between humour, fury, sentimentality and gloom it profiles a diverse cast of working class characters;

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sweet natured drinker Joe Philpot, loyal young apprentice Bert White, the oleaginous Christian, Slyme and ill-fated young married couple, the Eastons. Because this is a missive from and about the 'class war' (Sillitoe, 1991), Tressell also dissects the conduct and motives of the worst specimens of the managerial, employing and political classes. Some of those characterisations are drawn from Noonan's time in South Africa and England – aspects of Owen's biography mirror his own (Ball, 1979, Harker, 2003) – while others are deliberate caricatures, drawn to satirise the self-delusions, pretensions and hypocrisy of social elites. Contemporary readers might be turned off by Tressell's tendency to lay it on with a trowel, particularly when he details the immorality of Mugsborough's bourgeoisie. Apparently it was constituted by a collection of overfed sociopaths whose very names evoked their avarice and contempt for humanity, Sweater, Starvem, Didlum, Grinder and Sir Graball D'Encloseland. Clearly, there are tensions between Tressell's responsibilities as an 'artist' or 'novelist' and as a 'socialist intellectual'. Nuance is sacrificed in the name of political commitment (Miles, 1984; Nazareth, 1967) and the interior lives of the workers are more vividly realised than those of the privileged.

And hurrah for that! Although, I focus more on the book's political rather than its literary merits, it should be said that as a *socialist* and *working class* story *TRTP* violated 'inherited assumptions of what it was to write a novel, and to write a good competent novel' (Williams, 1983: 242)[20]. Its status as *Penguin Modern Classic* is attributable less to academic or literary judgements and more to its 'organic' popularity as a text that was passed from reader to reader, read collectively in workshops and performed by political theatre groups since the 1950s in Britain (Harker, 2003; Miles, 1984). It presents vivid descriptions of what people ate and drank, how they budgeted, of the atmosphere in the pub and at Sunday school, of racy dinner break conversations and of brutish, pointless toil. Much of the action takes place in a house that is being renovated by the tradesmen – *the Cave* – and we learn something about what it might have felt like to paint and scrub-down walls when hungry or frozen to the bone. Social historian Rebecca Yamin (2002) regards a passage in which the Owens anxiously calculate what Christmas gifts they can afford to buy their little son as an all too rare evocation of the

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[20] Following his death, Kathleen took possession of her father's manuscript and later showed it children's writer Jessie Pope who brought it to the attention of Thomas Franklin Grant Richards of *Richards Press*. Although impressed by the manuscript (Harker, 2003: 74), he considered it somewhat rambling and it was abridged for publication. Significant editorial changes were made to the texture, tone and content of the book, pulling its political punch somewhat. The full edition was first published in paperback by Paladin in 1991 with Alan Sillitoe's introduction (Ball, 1979; Harker; 2003).

status of toys and play in the lives of the poor. Brad Beaven (2005) also finds clues regarding working class leisure pursuits, the popularity of music-hall songs and works' day-trips, all of which were essential diversions from drudgery.

Nowadays the parenting, recreational, eating and educational practices of working class and poor communities are regularly served up as entertainment in the cultural sphere, most obviously in the genre of reality TV. *Jamie's Ministry of Food*, *The Secret Millionaire*, *Pram Face* (sic), *The Jeremy Kyle Show* and a host of similar programmes, invite viewers to ridicule, pity, judge and feign outrage at the inferior life choices and moral laxity of the so-called underclass. In stark contrast to the freakishness of those television narratives, Tressell's descriptions are underpinned by a political and economic analysis that allows readers to contextualise and problematise individual experience. Here is a discussion the kind of mundane dilemma regularly faced by the Owens and, presumably, by Noonan and families of his class,

> Frankie's stockings were all broken and beyond mending, so it was positively necessary to buy him another pair for fivepence three-farthings. These stockings were not much good – a pair at double the price could have been much cheaper, for they would have lasted three or four times longer; but they could not afford to buy the dearer kind. It was just the same with the coal: if they had been able to afford it they could have bought a ton of the same class of coal for twenty-six shillings but buying it as they did, by the hundred weight, they had to pay at the rate of thirty-three shillings and fourpence a ton. It was just the same with nearly everything else. This is how the working classes are robbed. Although their incomes are the lowest, they are compelled to buy the most expensive articles – that is the lowest-priced articles. (Tressell, 2004: 366).

Furthermore, as Raymond Williams (1983)[21] reminds us, if working class lives were not generally considered appropriate subjects for the literary form, real life working class people also made unlikely novelists. Condemned to spend the best part of their lives at labour, writers such as Noonan needed to be extraordinarily wilful and resourceful if their creative impulses were to find expression on the published page. *TRTP* was written by a 'worker fully engaged in his own work' who, for the purpose of mere survival, 'comes home from his job, writes, goes back to his job, writes, all under pressure' (Williams, 1983: 248). Kathleen Noonan,

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[21] Like Williams (1983) I prefer the book's original title '*The Ragged Arsed Philanthropists*'.

reckoned that the book took her father five years to write, during which time he was working 'a fifty-six and a half hour week' and maintaining his membership of the Social Democratic Federation (Ball, 1979: 140).

A social critique of capitalism

Noting that critiques of capitalism are as old as capitalism itself, Boltanski and Chiapello (2005b) distinguish two distinctive logics that have tended to frame oppositional discourses. *Social critique* focuses on the inequalities, poverty 'misery, exploitation, and the selfishness of a world that stimulates individualism rather than solidarity', while the alternative critique highlights more existential, or as Boltanski and Chiapello (2005a: 175-176) term them, *artistic* concerns. These relate to capitalism's negation of 'individual autonomy, singularity and authenticity' (2005a: 176). Both forms of critique are central to the purpose and content of *TRTP*. They are articulated through the private thoughts and public arguments of Owen, and in the narrative commentary that overlays the story itself. Those critiques remain central to contemporary anti-capitalist discourses, although they are not always successfully fused into a coherent and strategically minded political position (Duncombe, 2007; Frank, 2001; Reed 2001).

As a 'social' critique of capitalism, *TRTP* operates at a number of different levels. Most obviously, there is the emotional sway of a text that regularly moves the reader to tears and anger. Witness the diminishing fortunes of the once proud Linden family, its members variously rewarded with the workhouse, servitude and death. Bert White, based on a young friend and protégé of Noonan, is trapped in a pointless and exploitative apprenticeship where he learns little and is valued less. But viable critique needs to move beyond emotion if it is to have any long-term political impact. It requires a 'theoretical fulcrum and an argumentative rhetoric to give voice to individual suffering and translate it into terms that refer to the common good' (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2005b: 36). Tressell doesn't just want readers to sympathise with his characters, as Dickens was wont to do - indeed, most of the time his tone is sarcastic, impatient or goading. In the place of pity he offers the intellectual resources of anti-capitalism. Invoking an odd and deliberately jarring pedagogical device, reminiscent of Brecht's didactic method, the characters of Owen and later Barrington are quite literally given the floor to explain Marx's labour theory of value. In the chapters 'The Oblong' and 'The Great Oration' we learn that because workers are forced to sell their labour in the marketplace they are simultaneously robbed of their sense of entitlement to and ability to access the fruits of their own production (Williams, 1983).

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In return for their work they are given – Money, and the things they have made become the property of the people who do nothing. Then, as the money is of no use, the workers go to shops and give it away in exchange for some of the things they themselves have made. They spend – or give back – *All* their wages; but as the money they got as wages is not equal in value to the things they have produced they find that they are only able to buy back a *very small part*. So you see these little discs of metal – this Money – is a device for enabling those who do not work to rob the workers of the greater part of the fruits of their toil. (Tressell, 2004: 341-342 emphasis in original)

This is the fundamental injustice of capitalism; profit legitimises grand scale theft from those who contribute most to society, reducing them to a perpetual state of misery and want. Through his alter-ego Owen, Tressell opposes those who genuinely contribute to wealth creation in society with those who merely monopolise or consume it. In one memorable and counter-intuitive stroke he dismisses 'Tramps, Beggars, Society People, the 'Aristocracy', Great Landowners, All those possessed of hereditary Wealth' as a common class of parasites undertaking nothing in the way of 'useful work' (2004: 330). Another category includes those whose work 'benefits themselves and harms other people. Employers – or rather Exploiters of Labour; Thieves, Swindlers, Pickpockets; profit seeking shareholder; burglars; Bishops; Financiers; Capitalists and those persons humorously called "Ministers" of religion." (2004: 331). Tressell thus upends the hierarchy of status and legitimacy that is normalised by capitalism, specifically as it applies in the town of Mugsborough, but more generally as it applies in our 'meritocratic' era. Interestingly one of the most dishonest yet convincing rhetorical tricks played by neo-liberalism's current apologists, one practised by Republicans in the 2008 US presidential elections, is to cast as 'elitists' those who argue for tighter regulation of business, higher taxes or universal welfare provision. What Frank (2001: 10) calls 'market populism' equates democracy with share holding, social security nets with serfdom and allows Warren Buffett and Bill Gates to pass as 'little guys'. Tressell reminds us that the primacy of capitalism rests in part upon such inversions of reality and the social critique must deal with ideology in a clear headed way so that activists begin to posit alternatives to the accepted hierarchies of our times.

Even if new readers are emotionally stirred by *TRTP's* descriptions of absolute poverty, they might find its detours into Marxist theory somewhat removed from their own experiences of

personal enrichment and consumption in a (now formerly) booming economy. However, rather than concentrate on the disparity between the earnings of skilled manual workers in the early 1900s and those of 'knowledge-workers' in 21st Century Ireland, consider instead the continuity of worker 'vulnerability', a key theme pursued by Tressell and one with particular relevance to these risky economic times. Kirby (2006: 636-640) argues that capitalist globalisation has generated new threats to human and social well-being, while simultaneously eroding our 'coping mechanisms'. Volatile financial systems, insecure employment, credit enslavement, environmental hazards, social atomisation, withdrawal of the welfare net (Kirby, 2006) and other characteristics of our neo-liberal present not only condemn individuals to life on the perpetual brink, but also mean that if and when their fortunes decline they are less able to obviate the consequences. Concepts of globalisation or neo-liberalism were not common currency in Tressell's day, but his workers were ever cognisant of the precariousness of their 'situations' and the constant threat of being laid off:

> terror of the impending slaughter pervaded the house. Even those who were confident of being spared and kept on till the job was finished shared the general depression, not only out of sympathy for the doomed, but because they knew that a similar fate awaited themselves (2004: 263).

Having catalogued the shaky home and work circumstances of the 'Philanthropists', their constant and often counter-productive struggles to make and stretch their pathetic incomes, Tressell makes few concessions in terms of a happy ending. There are some glimmers of hope. Owen helps reconcile Easton and his wife Ruth; their marriage sabotaged by a combination of shared poverty, Easton's boozing and the lecherous presence of their lodger Slyme. Owen confronts the employer Rushton about his scandalous treatment of young Bert White; 'I give you fair warning – I know – enough - about you - to put you – where you deserve to be – if you don't treat him better – I'll have you punished – I'll show you up' (2004: 710, pauses signifying Owen's rage and ongoing battle with TB). Barrington, who comes from a prosperous family, makes a financial gift to Owen that could lift his family temporarily out of financial ruin. But these ephemeral moments of possibility actually serve to underline the working class's more general enslavement to material relations. Worst of all is their vulnerability to needless and otherwise avoidable death, whether in the form of 'industrial accidents' of the kind that befalls Joe Philpot, or the Tuberculosis that is certain to kill Owen or 'that most unnatural act of all, suicide' (Hunt, 2004: xiii).

An artistic critique

Tristram Hunt (2004: xviii) notes that Tressell was influenced by competing 'traditions within the socialist canon' and integrated 'both ethical and economic schools of thought'. He recognises the puritanism that fuels the book's regular attacks on the cultural lives and entertainments of the workers; their fondness for the pub, sporting events, music hall songs and newspapers like the *Daily Chloroform*. Here Tressell anticipate critiques of commodified mass culture, such as those by Horkheimer and Adorno (1973) that would emphasise cultural consumption's role in dulling the political sensibilities of the working class, accommodating them to the discipline of capitalist production and eroding their capacities for critical thinking. Unfortunately, as an intellectual Owen is a regular source of bemusement to his work-mates, marked out as different not only for the nature and fervour of his political conviction but also for his atheism, precise use of grammar, his gravitas and tee-total ways (see Hunt, 2004). Problematically for those of us less ascetic in our habits, Owen's restraint and rational arguments contrast too sharply with the workers' hedonism and emotional understandings. He cannot or will not appeal to their dreams, fantasies or hunger for escapism. With this juxtaposition of opposites Tressell exposes an important dimension of the Left's continued estrangement from the broader population; the lapses in empathy that make socialists condescend to those around us, proscribing behaviour, invoking taboos and ridiculing or demonising 'popular desire' (Duncombe, 2007a: 37). All of this is of course symptomatic of Owen's/our more general failure to establish real lines of communication with putative 'comrades'.

But Owen is not just the archetypal socialist kill-joy. If he is frustrated by the degraded cultural and productive lives of his colleagues, unlike them he actually believes that the working class should have more of the finer things in life and he clings to a romantic vision of work as personally fulfilling, socially useful and aesthetically rewarding. Tressell echoes the philosophical concerns of Victorian socialist, poet and artist, William Morris (Hunt, 2004) and his understanding of work's purpose:

> It is threefold, I think – hope of rest, hope of product, hope of pleasure in the work itself; and hope of these also in some abundance of good quality; rest enough and good enough to be worth having; product worth having by one who is neither a fool nor an ascetic; pleasure enough for all of us to be conscious of it while we are at work (Morris, 1934: 604).

Morris (1934) envisaged a world of work that nurtures both the mind and the soul, one that can validate skill and release imagination. Likewise, Tressell believes that workers when encouraged to experiment or practise creativity can pre-figure the experience of personal liberation by making and doing. Owen secures a commission to decorate a room according to his own artistic vision, a job that preoccupies and excites him. He researches 'Moorish design', meticulously plans every detail of his project and, gallingly for his boss, demands decent materials. As Owen loses himself in these tasks he becomes detached from the ongoing misery of his situation and experiences a genuine harmony with his labour, all the more precious because it is so rare and unexpected.

Acutely conscious of the real-world disjuncture between time spent at production and consumption, how those who sacrifice most to the former do least of the latter, Morris (1934) and Tressell also recognised that too much time and energy is diverted into the manufacture of cheap, sub-standard and unnecessary goods. If Tressell hoped that work might bring its own intrinsic rewards, he also understood the impossibility of such ambition under the corrupting influence of capitalism. Witness the employer Rushton and his enforcer Hunter, cutting corners on costs; employing men at lower rates, overpricing jobs, advocating the lowest grade materials and the most slapdash of methods.

> According to the specification, all the outside woodwork was supposed to have
> three coats, and the guttering, rain-pipes and the other ironwork two coats, but
> Crass and Hunter had arranged to make two coats do for most of the windows
> and woodwork and all the ironwork was to be made do with one coat only (2004:
> 307).

The workers, unsurprisingly, respond with cynicism - 'none of them took any pride in their work; they did not 'love' it. They had no conception of that lofty ideal of 'work for work's sake', which is so popular with the people who do nothing' (101) - and consequently the workplace culture is characterised by insincerity and alienation.

Paolo Freire (1972; 32) observed that as 'oppressors dehumanize others and violate their rights, they themselves also become dehumanized'. The reader is embarrassed by Hunter's surveillance of the workers and his misplaced loyalty to his employers. His obsessive desire to 'catch out' the others drives him to ludicrous extremes and he creeps up ladders, struggles through windows and tiptoes about to spy undetected. A mere employee he identifies upwards in the hierarchy not downwards: therefore he is hated by the workers and patronized by the

bosses. In one scene where Rushton and Sweater, owner of the *Cave*, survey the renovations, Hunter or Nimrod as he is nicknamed, waits eagerly to do their bidding. When finally called by Rushton, 'Nimrod ran to him like a dog taken notice of by his master: if he had possessed a tail, it is probable that he would have wagged it' (Tressell, 2004; 126). While this is a comical image, there is cold comfort in the realisation that the other workers would have behaved similarly if roles were reversed. In the face of arbitrary sackings and a general culture of fear, employees do the needful to curry favour with Hunter or anyone else with leverage. Crass a man devoid of charm and talent who has secured the role of foreman, dedicates his working week to 'cringing, fawning, abject servility' (351). Appreciating the marginal power that this affords him, the others ply Crass with alcohol they cannot afford and publicly defer to his opinions while privately detesting him

Will 21st Century employees be surprised to learn that work-places destroy initiative, reward arse-licking and perpetuate rivalry? Possibly not, but because those tendencies now get dressed up in the language of Human Relations, it is often difficult to trace the power dynamics involved. In the years since publication of *TRTP* capitalism has learned to embrace some of the elements of the 'artistic critique'. One of neo-liberalism's ideological innovations (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2005; Frank, 2001; Klein, 2000) has been to colonise the countercultural tropes of freedom, creativity and dynamism. As the 'public sector' becomes semantically associated with torpor and bureaucracy, the free-wheeling skateboarding CEO epitomises the vibrancy of private enterprise. We occupy a time intellectually and politically when rigid and polarised thinking is widely distrusted, especially when it comes to matters of social class. Theoretically, social scientists are indebted to analyses of power that highlight its diffusion rather than its monopolisation and we imagine that in many work-places, maybe even our own, there is scope for communication and negotiation across the employer/employee axis. We hear, for example, that at Google, the 'laid-back ambience is credited as a key part of its success. Free perks for staff include three healthy meals a day, massages and laundry services as well as an on-site gym and swimming pool.' (Smith, 2008)

Superficially, we experience a more humane version of capitalism, one that treats workers like people too. But as Jacques Donzelot (1991: 251) correctly observes, '[F]lexible hours, job enrichment, self-managed work teams, continued retraining', cannot be 'regarded as serious efforts to modify the capitalist regime'. After all, the Irish Small Firm's association can square its demand for a reduction in the already paltry minimum wage (SFA; July, 15th 2008) with its

promotion of 'Work-Life Balance' (www.sfa.ie). Detached from its social conscience, the artistic critique can and is being adapted in service of capitalism's bottom line, the profit-motive.   Workplaces are being humanised in order to minimise resistance and mobilize workers towards fuller participation in the dominant 'logic of production' (Donzelot, 1991: 279). Although he could never have anticipated the form and content of these new management approaches, Tressell would have seen through the artifice. He understood that alienation encompasses *both* artistic and social dimensions; that a 'work-life balance' is impossible when worker vulnerability and material inequality grow ever more pronounced.

Acquiescence, consent and sporadic resistance

That capitalism is founded upon and is sustained by violence, has been a significant theme in theoretical and popularising analyses of neo-liberalism over the last decade (Klein, 2007; Negri, 1999). Naomi Klein (2007) has highlighted the shock tactics and 'therapies' practised in Chile, South Africa, and post-Katrina New Orleans; where ideologues, opportunistic corporations and political elites have actively cultivated and exploited instances of war, terror and social disintegration in order to establish the primacy of the market.   Antonio Negri (1999), borrowing from Marx, maintains that violence has been a 'constant' in capitalism, although its form and substance have changed over time. Earlier processes of accumulation were supported by the overt brutality of theft, enclosure, slavery and imperial conquest, but as the capitalist system developed, the 'silent coercion of economic relations' became fundamental to its survival and identity (Negri, 1999: 250-267).

Tressell evokes both the silent and more vulgar forms of coercion as he describes the symbiotic relationship between violence and capitalism in *TRTP*. As the tradesmen renovate the Cave, their workdays are punctuated by episodes of bullying, summary dismissal and Hunter's creeping surveillance.

> 'Get the work done! Or if you don't want to I'll very soon find someone who does! I've been noticing your style of doing things for some time past and I want you to understand that you can't play the fool with me. There's plenty of better men than you walking about'(2004: 35).

It is a 'reign of terror – the terror of the sack' (2004: 493). Even the most intimate personal relationships are contaminated by 'jealousy and ill-feeling' (2004: 404) as the workers vie for petty privileges or the simple honour of being kept on. Their family lives also suffer. Although obviously underpaid Easton turns his resentments on his wife, blaming her for their financial

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hardship; 'It seems to me,... that you don't manage things as well as you might' (2004: 52). The childhoods of Mugsborough's youngsters are devastated by poverty and want, what Owen regards as another kind of violence, and he despairs that parents are 'willing and content that their children should be made into beasts of burden for the benefit of other people' (2004: 280).

Claims of 'coercion' or 'force' do not fully explain why so many workers then and now are impervious to solidarity and socialist argument. Undeniably violence of the kind described above is a disincentive to collective organisation, but Tressell, like Gramsci, also recognised the deeper problem of consent. Mugsborough is a 'perfect' example of Hegemony, a place 'where dominated groups are unable to distinguish between their own interests and attitudes and those of dominant groups' (Van Dijk, 1998: 102). The workers believe themselves to have informed political opinions – affecting Tory or Liberal allegiances – and demand that those viewpoints be respected by the ever contemptuous Owen. Paradoxically, they seem equally convinced that they cannot or should not leave any discernible mark on the world around them. They regularly interrupt debates about politics – farting, wisecracking or digressing - and proudly claim disinterest in life's bigger philosophical questions. This culture of self-satisfaction, ignorance and apathy is reinforced by Mugsborough's 'ideological state apparatus'; its Sunday schools, churches, politicians and popular entertainments. In some of its most powerful paragraphs, *TRTP* explains how those institutions distort and obscure social reality and further infantilise an all too receptive working class. 'From their infancy they had been trained to distrust their own intelligence, and to leave the management of the affairs of the world – and for that matter the next world too – to their betters' (2004: 247). In the place of social policy there is the Organised Benevolence Society, providing charity that 'humiliated, degraded and pauperized' its victims 'and prevented the problem being dealt with in a sane and practical manner' (2004: 428).

Despite living with and managing poverty on a daily basis the workers present the most facile explanations of its causes:

> 'The greatest cause of poverty is hover-population' remarked Harlow.
> 'Drink is the cause of most of the poverty' said Slyme.
> 'Yes' said Crass agreeing with Slyme, 'an thers plenty of 'em wot's too lazy to
> work when they can get it' (2004: 17)

This from men who were acutely aware of how few decent opportunities existed locally and lived in constant dread of being laid off! Much of their chatter fixates on the inevitability of

things as they are and demonstrates their resignation towards their fate, while also recording a disturbing lack of empathy towards each other. They distance themselves from the shame of their own unacknowledged poverty by demonising and scapegoating anyone lower down the pecking order, whether women, foreigners or the unemployed.

TRTP is torn between what James Scott (1990) calls 'thick' and 'thin' theories of ideology The former refers to a highly deterministic analysis of capitalism as the *Great System* that structures and routinises the attitudes and behaviours of all social classes; 'the present system compels selfishness. One must either trample upon others or be trampled upon oneself' (Tressell, 2004: 246). The 'thin theory' is a based on the (marginally) more actor oriented assumption that workers pragmatically resign themselves to the impossibility of change:

> I begin to think that a great deal of what Owen says is true. But for my part I can't see 'ow it's ever goin to be altered, can you?
>
> Blowed if I know mate. But whether it can be altered or not, there's one thing very certain, it won't be done in *our* time' (2004: 264).

Admittedly, in this day and age it is a barbed compliment to describe a book as offering great insights into the workings of ideology. Neo-liberalism assumes that we are rational actors propelled onward by our self-interest; sussed and savvy consumers empowered by our autonomous market choices. To speak about false consciousness is a kind of heresy and even among socialists it is difficult to sustain the argument that the masses are duped by the seamless operation of ideology. It is an insult to democracy or cultural pluralism, leaves us open to the inevitable charge of elitism and raises uncomfortable questions about the possibility and desirability of popular activism. When Tressell presents the workers as deluded foils to Owen's intellectualism it is a risky strategy for anyone seeking political allies and one I find difficult to endorse. Optimistically perhaps, I choose to believe that something more interesting might be going on in the text. Although the book draws on real acquaintances of Noonan, it is less a commentary on the health of their consciousness than it is an attempt to activate the consciousness of the readership. As Roland Barthes (1993ed: 40)[22] has observed, '[T]o see someone who does not see is the best way to be intensely aware of *what* he does not see'. If the workers cannot see through capitalism's mystifications, Owen cannot see the limitations of his own style of communication. By revealing this disconnect between Owen's theory and the workers' ideology, Tressell calls on *us* to fill the intellectual space between; so that we name

and clarify our political analysis, recognise the challenges implicit in collective organisation and begin to construct convincing counter-hegemonic arguments.

Even when subordinates appear to acquiesce in the face of domination, their behaviour 'offstage' in privatised or sequestered social spaces may suggest critical attitudes that are otherwise imperceptible from their formal encounters with elites (Scott, 1990). Although, Tressell is deeply frustrated by the workers' collusion with oppression, it is not the only story he tells us about their political awareness. He records various acts of subversion and resistance, what Scott (1990) calls 'hidden transcripts', all reflecting an underlying sense of grievance and dispossession. These transcripts include disparaging nicknames, 'Nimrod', 'Misery' or 'Pontius Pilate' for their overlord, Hunter. Instances of theft are framed as acts of vengeance. When Joe Philpot steals turpentine to rub into his aching legs and shoulders, he mutters '[T]his is where we gets some of our own back' (2004: 351). Even pious young Slyme, repeating the sentiment 'we must get our own back somehow' (2004: 250), engages in industrial sabotage, destroying perfectly good wallpaper so he can feign greater productivity. Furtive cigarettes, Joe Philpot's illicit excursions to buy beer for his mates and their occasional outbursts into song, all suggest the workers appreciate the awfulness of their conditions and they try to claw back dignity and autonomy whenever they can.

Robin Kelley's (1996) *Race Rebels* traces the hidden history of Black working class resistance in the USA. Much of this resistance was/is expressed outside formal political channels; rarely claiming an *a priori* philosophical vision or status, more typically focused on issues of 'identity, dignity and fun' (Kelley, 1996; 3) in work, cultural or public spaces. Kelley also foresees the dangers in romanticising this conduct, whether by overstating its political impact or assuming it is a substitute for organisation (Duncombe 2007b; Reed, 2000). Although he does not invoke the now fashionable discourse of resistance, Tressell recognises its limitations and ostensibly treats such survival strategies as expressions of 'apolitical' as opposed to 'political' consciousness. Interestingly, Joe Philpot who is perhaps the greatest workplace resister of them all is also one of Owen's few converts to Socialism. It is a pity then that *TRTP* does not go further with this theme, that it does not explore if and how Owen and Barrington might have built upon the sublimated anger of their colleagues in order to win lasting concessions from the bosses. But again this is not just Tressell's failure, it is ours. The Irish Left still finds it difficult to harness those sporadic outbursts of dissent – rejected EU referenda

or complaints to Liveline – that suggest that capitalism's ideological supremacy is less secure that we would otherwise imagine.

The legacy, a how 'not to' of socialism?

At the risk of alienating prospective readers, particularly those already committed to the Left, I admit that *TRTP* is a deeply ambivalent appraisal of socialist consciousness and its ability to thrive when and where it is most needed. Tressell suggests that even when such consciousness does emerge it is easily corrupted by hopelessness – Frank Owen's despairing lurches into suicidal fantasy - and cynicism – the Renegade Socialist who believes that people 'are being beaten with whips of their own choosing' (2004: 721). When a motley crew of activists finally mobilises in Mugsborough they are attacked by a mob. Unsurprisingly, Tressell's pessimism is much criticised by socialist writers. Dave Harker (2003) correctly problematises the mismatch between *TRTP's* obvious engagement with theory and critique and its limited acknowledgment of really existing socialist organisations. References to the labour movement are oblique and Tressell never really considers what role unions might play in confronting ritualised exploitation in the *Cave*. Noonan's biographer, FC Ball (1979; 120), observes how Owen stumbled over his 'arguments upon fundamentals, which the men neither understood nor related to their own experience' when he might have fared better if he had identified a practical issue around which they could coalesce. James D Young (1980: 292) is more scathing still, finding Tressell guilty of a kind of revolutionary bad faith;

> Robert Tressell's explicit rejection of the classical Marxist argument that the emancipation of the working class could only be accomplished by the working class themselves permeates his socialist concepts and colours his portrayal of the English working class. Though he was critical of 'thieves, swindlers, pickpockets, burglars, financiers bishops and ministers of religion', he reserved his most bitter criticism for the 'real enemy' – the English working class.

However, I think that one of the greatest achievements of *TRTP* is to evoke the frustration that is engendered when socialist consciousness is abstracted from the practical politics of doing. Owen uses his lunch-breaks to lecture the others on theory, but does not speak directly to the indignities they suffer on a daily basis. Tressell knows that Owen fails to make socialism relevant, but *TRTP* cannot (or will not) provide the blue-print for a better society. Instead he uses Owen to explore the personal isolation that many activists experience when they find themselves out of step with the general mood - the loneliness of the long distance socialist. Isolation is exacerbated by a recurring contradiction; socialism privileges the working class as

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revolutionary subjects, yet socialists are often unable to establish real lines of communication with that broader constituency. Most obviously, *TRTP* explores how a combination of ideological forces and ritual humiliations fracture and erode worker solidarity. More subtle, however, is its reminder that political conviction and theoretical clarity offer little protection against the disappointment of not making an impact.

If *TRTP* exposes the Left's problem with relevance it also suggests that we suffer a deficit of imagination. In the course of the novel, Tressell keeps a certain analytical distance from Owen, often extending, sometimes challenging the conclusions drawn by his lead character. Noonan's daughter Kathleen believed that Noonan saw himself as a composite of the temperaments of Owen and Barrington, the latter a high-born slightly shadowy figure who does not need to labour but chooses to do so in order to understand the lives of the workers (Harker, 2003; 68). While Owen debates the issues of the day with his colleagues, scorning their judgmentalism, their nationalism and their rudimentary take on economics, he, like so many of us, is unable to explain what form really existing socialism might take. At best and somewhat unconvincingly he can only suggest what socialism is not. Like his colleagues he too is ultimately tied to a vision of things as they are.

Barrington, probably dredging his personal history of advantage, is better able to imagine and explain what a socialist society might actually entail. The chapter 'The Great Oration' is a rare opportunity for him to take the workplace lectern and flesh out that vision;

> PUBLIC OWNERSHIP and cultivation of the land, the PUBLIC OWNERSHIP of the mines, railways, canals, ships. Factories and all the other means of production, and the establishment of an Industrial Civil Service – a National Army of Industry – for the purpose of producing the necessaries, comforts and refinements of life in that abundance which has been made possible by science and machinery – for the use and benefit of the *whole of the people.* (2004: 598 emphasis in original)

Towards its end *TRTP* shifts focus slightly from Owen to Barrington, perhaps implying that the latter is better resourced to sustain his socialist convictions into the long-term. Predictably, some writers attribute this to Tressell's innate conservatism, his implicit advocacy of 'socialism-from-above' (Young, 1985; 296) and his belief that real-life workers, including Owen, will never make it without bourgeois paternalism and direction. I think that Young's

commentary lacks generosity and is too fixated upon the wearying factionalism of the Left where tendency battles counter tendency to 'authenticate' and own the movement[23]. *TRTP's* message is more nuanced and more honourable. Tressell recognises that for all who participate in struggle, our greatest strengths may be our greatest weaknesses. The workers are practical and attuned to the obstacles in their lives, but are too wedded to the here and now to embrace new possibilities. Owen's analysis of his class position is acute but it distances him from his workmates and denies him vital forms of community and personal solidarity. Barrington's privilege protects him from deprivation and reprisal but he will never truly know the daily grind of oppression.   Together all of these characters bring something valuable and useful to the Left, but separately their vision is partial and their reach is limited.

TRTP is not necessarily the best book written about socialism, but it is one of the most insightful stories ever written about the Left. As a 'problem posing' text in the Freirean sense, it avoids easy solutions and alerts us to the tensions that beset activism. It does not and cannot resolve the Left's problem with broader political strategy or our failure to connect with the majority of people's hopes and dreams but it recognises the costs associated with that failure. Perhaps that doesn't sound like much of an achievement but I think we need constant reminding of how and why it is important. And as long as we indulge ourselves with sectarianism and recrimination, Tressell's work will sound a righteous note of disapproval.

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Community Development and the Arts: Sustaining the Democratic Imagination in Lean and Mean Times.

Rosie Meade and Mae Shaw

Abstract

This paper argues for a more expressive and expansive understanding of culture, citizenship and democracy. It seeks to reaffirm the importance of imagination, creativity and emotion in sustaining and enriching community development, particularly given the inexorable rise of a managerialist and programmatic culture of practice. Community development should have an intrinsic interest in the fostering of a democratic culture within and between communities and between communities and state institutions. In practice, however, democracy often becomes treated as a 'deliverable', and community participation is filtered through prescribed and institutionalized relationships. In the context of funding retrenchment and public sector cutbacks, democracy and participation can simply become codewords for neoliberal hegemony.

Against this, we argue that the concept of democracy must be reclaimed as an active social, political and cultural process through which change occurs in different contexts and spaces by means of subversion, opposition and resistance as much as by participation and consent. In this regard the arts have much to offer community development, but the relationship should also be a reciprocal one. The arts can be drawn upon to justify particular kinds of social and cultural exclusion, particularly when creativity becomes monetized and subject to market

incursions. There are also parallels between the pressures community arts projects experience to demonstrate results and relevance, and those experienced by community development projects. Therefore, this paper considers dialectical tendencies in both community development and the arts. We argue for a more symbiotic engagement between these fields, and by using the term 'democratic imagination' we hope to enliven what can otherwise become a deadly culture of instrumentalism in both.

By highlighting the concepts of cultural democracy and cultural resistance this paper explores the potential for a more nuanced and less institutionally fixated vision of cultural practice. Cultural democracy acknowledges the centrality of creativity to human experience and emphasizes that citizens be actively supported to engage in the production, consumption and distribution of the arts. Cultural resistance theories recognize that cultural and political expression can occur beyond the radar of mainstream community development and arts practice. Resistance is too easily dismissed as atomized and trivial, and we suggest that practitioners give it more committed attention in order to better understand the issues, identities and ideas that animate communities.

Finally, we consider the creative potential of 'consumption' which is often dismissed as a degraded form of cultural engagement. In so doing, we challenge some of the underlying assumptions regarding the apathy and passivity of communities that serve to rationalize policy and practice interventions in the current context.

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Introduction

> Utopia's proper space is the education of desire, to teach desire, to desire better, to desire more, and above all to desire in a different way (EP Thompson 1976:790)

> When the times darken
> Will there be singing even then?
> There will be singing even then.
> Of how the times darken (Bertolt Brecht, translated by Edwin Morgan)

These two quotations, together, speak powerfully and eloquently to the particular challenges of the times in which we live. The first might be read as a forceful challenge to the spirit of conformity and resignation that has characterized the crudely economistic rationality that now dominates the public and political spheres. The problem here is conceived as acquiescence to a limited and limiting form of social and political life – particularly by those who benefit least from existing arrangements. Desiring 'in a different way' therefore suggests that the drive to think economistically and to pursue self-interest as mere consumers or customers strips desire of its capacity for yearning, craving and longing for something more meaningful. But more than that, it diminishes our ability to feel, think and act collectively as democratic citizens.

Bertolt Brecht combines a threat with a warning and a hope in his metaphor of the dark. In the first place, there is a warning to those in power that the human spirit cannot be broken, despite the darkness that looms. There is also an invocation to make sense of 'how the times darken' (and why) and the implicit warning about simply cursing the darkness. This is as much a matter of reason as it is of feeling. Perhaps, too, we can apprehend a warning about relying on certain kinds of institutionalized or formalized responses to the darkening, and a conviction that a deeper expression of the human spirit will be necessary if the forces of darkness are to be confronted. What is perhaps most important in what Brecht is saying is that, whilst singing can simply relieve the darkness, it can potentially do much more: it can begin to convert the darkness into a struggle for light. This is essentially an emancipatory process because in the singing, the singers collectively become active subjects in politics rather than objectified victims of politics. Such work may even form a kind of creative vanguard, securing the fertile ground on which the work of progressive politics can, once again, begin to flourish.

The reason these quotes have been selected to begin this article is twofold. The first is to do with language and expression. Used within the context of what currently constitutes democratic life for community groups, the quotes are discursively subversive in that they speak in a language that establishes a basis for interpretation, expressiveness and discussion rather than blind adherence. Tony Judt (2010: 6), in his book *Ill Fares the Land*, sees our current predicament in large part as a discursive one: 'Our problem is not what to do; it is how to talk about it'. In other words, the language available to us has become so constricted that questions to do with fairness, justice and morality – the real questions for democratic life – have become depoliticized within a stunted and sanitized discourse. In the service of a more expressive

vocabulary, the poet Adrienne Rich (2007: 423) emphasizes the utility of the 'great muscle of metaphor' that takes strength from collective recognition and upon which we must draw if we are to transcend 'that brute dictum, "There is no alternative"'. Or to put it another way, we cannot talk about suffering, need, anger or greed in the alien and alienating language of the boardroom.

Second, the quotes generate a sense of what is possible when the intellectual and affective dimensions of human experience can be activated towards a common purpose: to excavate, understand and re-imagine both external and internalized relations of power. Structures of power and domination work their way into how we see ourselves and others so that they are regarded as natural – common sense, as it were. We argue that the arts offer a unique possibility to turn the spotlight on this so-called common sense and to light the fuse of imagination that is central to the creation of the kind of democratic society that seeks to ask the right questions of itself. In this article, we argue that community development should have an intrinsic interest in the fostering of a democratic culture within and between communities and between communities and state institutions – however compromising these relationships may become in particular contexts. At this time, we are particularly interested in the potential of the arts to rescue community development from the darkening shadow of the managerialist paradigm that has diminished its practice globally and that actively stifles the capacity to imagine better and more just alternatives. In fact, the latest rediscovery of self-help in the face of staggering cuts in public welfare potentially places community workers at the forefront as (albeit reluctant) carriers of the new welfare order.

We are interested therefore in reviving the potential of community development to catalyse and nourish a more dialectical relationship between the cultural politics of people in communities and the wider political culture of the state. Finally, we wish to draw together what we think are some vital components of the kind of democratic disposition that desires more and desires better for all in these darkening times.

Community development and democracy: an ambivalent relationship

As an essentially contested concept, democracy has a range of meanings, and community development has been drawn upon to support competing and sometimes conflicting models (Shaw and Martin 2000). Generally and historically speaking, community development is

concerned with the relationship between government and its citizens, and is charged variously with strengthening, inducing or 'delivering' participatory democracy. This has become a particularly problematic prospect in the twenty-first century because as John Gaventa (2007: x) puts it:

> Democracy is at once the language of military power, neoliberal market forces, political parties, social movements, donor agencies and NGOs. What is going on?

What this signifies is that democracy is continuously and famously rediscovered by different and competing actors, particularly at times of crisis or change. Such plasticity may be both a strength and a weakness, but in any case its deep ambivalence has to be acknowledged in a global context where there appears to be 'an obligation' to export a particular version throughout the world, whatever the wider consequences (Chomsky, 2003). At the same time, globalisation destabilises and undermines (and sometimes reinforces) traditional forms of affiliation and identity in the sudden confrontation with the 'stranger'. These changes – mobility of people and finance, social heterogeneity and the competing claims to 'belonging' they produce – place new demands and pressures on what Amin (2002: 960) calls 'the politics of living together'. A more nuanced approach to democracy is therefore necessary in order to locate its ideological deployment in policy and to appreciate how this translates in community development theory and practice.

Community development occupies a contradictory yet strategic position between the demands of the state - to deliver policy objectives - and the needs and interests of people in diverse communities - to articulate their own experience, often as a critique of policy (Popple, 1995). In its best sense participatory democracy, as articulated through community development, has served as the crucible for contestation, negotiation and, in some important cases, significant reform. Within the neoliberal state, however, a *genuinely participatory* democracy is seen as at best a time-wasting irritant and, at worst, a barrier to 'economic growth'. Under such circumstances, maintaining legitimacy and consent becomes a difficult balancing act for the state: there are real tensions between the authoritarianism of its market enforcement and its responsibilities to support individual freedom and social solidarity (Harvey, 2005:79). Democratic engagement, whether in government institutions or informal governance of the kind facilitated through community development, therefore, uneasily embodies deeply contradictory ambitions.

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Over the last decade or so, the discourses and practice of community development became inextricably linked in many contexts with concepts such as 'active citizenship', 'social capital' and, as noted already, 'participatory democracy'. Generally, these discourses assume that the most effective way for citizens to co-operate, voice their opinions or influence processes of governance is through participation in community-based structures and organisations. Localised institutions are presumed to more accurately represent citizens' interests both internally, within the community context itself, and externally, to government, state, media and other power structures. Since the mid-1990s, coincident with the normalisation of social partnership in the Irish context, the success of New Labour in the UK, and the establishment of the Scottish Parliament, the range of agencies claiming and promoting such forms of community engagement has grown exponentially to include actors from statutory, private and NGO sectors. Indeed the duty to 'consult the community' is now obligatory in England (Communities and Local Government, 2009) and Scotland (Scottish Parliament, 2003).

Although suggestive of community ownership and control, these invocations of community participation typically fail to explain 'what exactly people are being enjoined to participate in, for what purpose, who is involved and who is absent' (Cornwall, 2008; 281). Furthermore, their democratic reach tends to be defined narrowly. It continues to be wedded to traditional political concerns such as local government reform and focussed upon relations, whether oppositional or more congenial, with the state. Discourses represent citizens as 'targets' for engagement in existing or future structures, represented in more or less equal measure as problem and/or solution (Mooney and Neal, 2009). The creation of institutions is privileged as a marker of democratic engagement, at the expense of a more qualitative understanding of the practices that engender or hinder democracy in the broad socio-cultural field. Important though engaged interaction between formal political institutions and more informal community networks might be, such interaction is usually conducted within 'invited' spaces which are mediated and controlled by the powerful with a narrow focus on increasingly market-led policy priorities (Gaventa, 2004). Mainstream discourses and practices of community participation rarely recognise those other realms of life, including workplace, family and cultural settings where democracy is being practised or can take root (See Greene, 1976).

We would like to emphasise a more expansive concept of democracy, one which is not simply a set of managed institutions or relationships and certainly not a codeword for neoliberal hegemony. Instead, we would argue that the concept needs to be reclaimed as an active social,

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political and cultural process through which change occurs in different contexts and spaces by means of subversion, opposition and resistance as much as by participation and consent. In this sense, democracy is sustained not by the conformist citizen, but by the agency of the critical and creative citizen. This highlights a potentially crucial role for community development practitioners in finding ways to enhance people's potential for democratic agency by helping to release or resource their capacity to be active and creative.

The poet, Emily Dickinson, writes that 'imagination lights the fuse of possibility', and it is just such a sense of possibility that community development needs to become infused with. Malik (2000: 46) argues that the arts provides a distinctive space where personal and political roles and relations can be renegotiated and re-imagined partly because of its unique potential to take us out of ourselves, 'to range over the actual, the probable, the possible and even the impossible'. In this sense the arts have much to offer community development. But the relationship should also be reciprocal. The expectation – if not always the actuality - of participation which is enshrined in anything which calls itself community development may lend weight and depth to what otherwise may be ephemeral or diversionary arts activities. Such a symbiotic relationship may create the conditions in which 'imagination' can be sustained as a dynamic process of communication so that 'meaning-making' begins to replace 'meaning-taking' as a primary objective of community development work. Indeed Raymond Williams (1989) argues that the process of communication itself leads to community in the sense of 'the sharing of common meanings and thence common activities and purposes: the offering, reception and comparison of new meanings, leading to the tensions and achievements of growth and change'.

By using the term 'democratic imagination' we hope to enliven what can otherwise become a deadly culture of instrumentalism in both the arts and community development fields. We are also suggesting that arts and community practices must seek to unleash underexplored possibilities: for entering attentively into the experience of others; for asserting the place of the arts and cultural production in the lives of communities; for excavating and exploring the causes of flaws and wounds in society; for thinking critically about structures and relations of power; and for acting creatively to transform the world collectively for the better (Meade and Shaw 2007). We argue that the relationship between community development and participatory arts needs to be reconsidered in light of these possibilities. In the following sections we suggest

that the concepts of *cultural democracy* and *cultural resistance* can contribute to a more nuanced and less institutionally fixated vision of cultural practice.

Cultural democracy in the marketplace

Cultural democracy conceptualises democracy as vibrant, public and discursive (McGonagle, 2007). It asserts that citizens should and do communicate their views and understandings of the world through a range of processes and in a multiplicity of spheres. In particular, cultural democracy positions cultural production as both central to human experience and as a necessary site for democratisation. In other words, citizens are seen as creators, as opposed to mere audiences or spectators, whose active engagement in the making, consumption and distribution of culture must be acknowledged and supported (see Matarasso, 2006). Here, 'culture' incorporates both 'ways of life' or shared 'meanings' *and* 'special processes of discovery and creativity', including the arts (Williams, 1958/1989: 4). While it is obvious that all of us are involved in the fashioning and re-fashioning of culture in its anthropological sense, it is not clear that opportunities to engage in the arts are so broadly distributed. Matarasso (2006:3) points to the persistence of cultural exclusion and the failure of governments, in particular, to support 'the diversity of cultural expression'. Furthermore, dominant classifications of *the culture* or *the cultures* of a given society often tend towards reification or essentialism: valuing individual artefacts over collective enterprise, heritage over ecology, authors over audiences and the heroic over the mundane. In this way the porosity and contested character of culture is overlooked and under-examined, and particular versions are promoted to the exclusion of others.

Intense political interest in the 'creative industries' illustrates the point. Peck (2009:7) argues, for example, that 'the creativity script' in the USA in particular combines cultural libertarianism with neoliberal economic imperatives: originality and creativity is 'cool' - so long as it sells. The result, in some cases, has been the bohemification of declining inner city areas, attracting diverse groups which in turn contribute to the creation of a vibrant some cases, has been the bohemification of declining inner city areas, attracting diverse groups that in turn contribute to the creation of a vibrant metropolitan space, only to drive out traditional working class communities who can no longer afford to live there. As Peck (2009) puts it, 'hey presto, thorny political problem becomes competitive asset'. In this process, creativity strategies, such as arts projects and 'street culture', can simply represent commodified assets that reinforce the neo-liberalized domination of public space and the exclusion of the poor. Far from an

imaginative clash of ideas, struggles and meaning, the outcome is more likely to be a homogenized version of culture, which is 'rolled out' irrespective of diverse interests and experience.

Similar developments are discernible across the European Union where, according to Marita Muukkonen (2004), the meaning of culture has been appropriated for new and dubious purposes in official cultural policy documents. She observes a transformation towards a model of cultural economics – as opposed to cultural politics – based on the 'reciprocal movement of commodifying culture and culturalizing industry' (Muukkonen 2004: 3). In other words, culture is primarily regarded as a commodity, devoid of transcendent symbolic meaning and available only to those in a position to afford it. At the same time, economic production relies on the arts as a means of providing economic advantage – 'value added'. Business leaders and management gurus have become as interested in creativity as those who are involved in the arts, reflecting a change from a manufacturing economy to what has been called an 'economy of the imagination' (Mirza 2006). This places artists and the arts in general in a particularly invidious position and has the potential to reinforce a deeply conservative estimation of the potential of art as critique.

The establishment of Creative Scotland Ltd (2010) to replace the Scottish Arts Council and Scottish Screen, for example, is symptomatic of the times. It is made up of 'key stakeholders' including local authorities, the voluntary sector and business interests. At its long-awaited launch, and in a climate of impending cuts, the Director, according to arts critic and journalist Joyce McMillan, 'spouted worrying management speak' about 'making new partnerships' and 'being an advocate for the arts' (*The Scotsman* 24 July 2010). Given the economistic view of the arts, which already pertains, and the way in which such cuts will no doubt focus the managerialist mind, it is reasonable to assume that the commodification of the arts will continue apace.

Furthermore, in situations of scarcity or diminishing public expenditure, the arts are being increasingly functionalized as government demands 'that [they] build communities, regenerate economies and include marginalized groups' (Selwood 2006: 53). The parallels with community development are instructive. For example, projects begin to redevelop and redirect their work in ways calculated to secure funding, what Belfiore (2006) calls 'policy attachment'. This, in turn, can severely compromise the nature of the work undertaken, creating an aesthetic

that is framed by 'officialdom's image of the public' (Selwood 2006: 54). For one thing, substantial anecdotal evidence would suggest that those projects that are conceptualized and imposed from above according to limiting funding streams and limited timescales, often fail to attract the very people for whom they are intended, leading to questions about the effective and efficient use of public funding. This may leave community arts projects particularly vulnerable in the context of public expenditure cuts. In a wider sense, there is a distinct danger that community identity and experience is presented in terms associated with the heritage industry that all too often offers a sanitized representation of social reality – 'postcard versions' (Selwood, 2006) – under the banner of 'popular culture'. Popular culture as 'product of the people' was historically understood as standing 'in creative tension with, though not necessarily direct opposition to, mass-consumer culture' (McGuigan 1996: 126). More recently, it has been used to describe all manner of mainstream cultural practices, particularly those peddled by the market.

As proponents of cultural democracy, it is essential that we take into account the issues highlighted above and that we look more carefully at what constitutes popular culture in the current context, and by what authority. First, it may be necessary to talk about popular cultures rather than popular culture, appreciating that class, place and other affiliations inflect the cultural lives of citizens. Second, we might need to look beyond the artefacts and experiences that people buy, to consider their own flashes of artistry and productivity. Of course these may be difficult to track, particularly when they involve no obvious commercial exchange or occur in lowly venues or in private spaces. Third, we might consider whether and how state and market forces misrecognize popular cultures: by denying them status, audiences or channels of distribution. Finally, we may ask what, if anything, communities need in order to make and do culture better. In raising this we might keep in mind Paul Willis's warning against condescension and presumption: not starting with the question 'why are their cultures not as we think they should be?' but rather with 'what are their cultures?' (Willis 1990: 5) and maybe, even, with 'what would they like them to be?'

Cultural invasion and cultural resistance

It has become almost a commonplace fact that life in many post-industrial democracies is more unequal than at any time since World War II (see Wilkinson and Pickett 2009). And this appears to be true on a range of iindicators: income, mobility, health, education, morbidity and mortality, criminality. According to Judt (2010: 21), for example, there is a negative correlation

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between income inequality and trust, with serious implications for levels of suspicion in relation to difference. He quotes research that demonstrates that an increase in mistrustfulness is particularly marked in the United States, the United Kingdom and Ireland, 'three countries in which the dogma of unregulated individual self-interest was most assiduously applied to public policy'. His simple conclusion is that 'inequality is corrosive […] it rots society from within' (2010: 21).

It is worth remembering then that the arts can provide a convenient means of political displacement, as it were: distracting attention from the rotting process, or even aestheticizing its putrifying remains. This potential for ideological complicity in the arts and cultural spheres was emphasized by the Frankfurt theorists Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer in an analysis that seems to have continuing relevance today. Writing during the mid-twentieth century they described how the 'culture industry' – incorporating the media, mass culture and advertising spheres – bound individuals to the repressive logic of capitalist society and effectively hollowed out their intellects (Kellner 1995: 28–31). Stereotyped narratives, formulaic characterizations, the elevation of the 'average' to the 'heroic' – e.g. our own cults of celebrity – and the constant din of advertising, were just some of the strategies employed to divert and distract the public (Horkheimer and Adorno 1972: 130–168). In this pessimistic and generalizing appraisal, mass culture and the more degraded forms of artistic practice are seen to both demand and secure the public's political conformity.

> The phrase 'the world wants to be deceived', has become truer than had ever
> been intended. People are not only, as the saying goes, falling for the swindle;
> if it guarantees them even the most fleeting gratification they desire a deception
> which is nonetheless transparent to them. (Adorno, 1991; 89)

Despite such potential for manipulated alienation, however, the arts and cultural practices can also speak out against oppression and domination. For example, the sociologists Eyerman and Jamison (1998) have analysed the longstanding significance of song in helping social movements in the United States to frame issues, to memorialize grievances and victories, and to demonstrate and create internal solidarity. Song – like other art forms – provides activists with alternative routes to the hearts and minds of potential supporters and adversaries, but it can also be an expression of politics itself, as Brecht reminds us. Recognizing the 'political' role of the arts, forces us to look beyond the tired institutional formulae for democratic communication that still characterizes much community development practice. Furthermore, if

we were to adopt a more organic approach to popular culture, such as that suggested in the previous section, we would surely find that citizens inflect, oppose and transcend their given roles in surprising ways. Countering Adorno and Horkheimer somewhat, we might acknowledge how, via the most 'miniscule' of gestures and deviations, people add to the culture and in so doing how they defy being reduced and objectified by the all pervasive 'grid of discipline' that surrounds them (de Certeau 1984: xiv). Given our concern at the bland homogeneity that characterizes mainstream public and political debate, we are particularly interested in the extent to which artistic and cultural practices might subvert or resist the dominant ways of thinking and talking about contemporary life. At the very least, this process might open up a space for creative contestation. In these terms, we are interested not only in pluralizing or democratizing the practice of the arts, but also in celebrating their radical and transformative potential, however tentative or muted it may sometimes be.

Stephen Duncombe (2003: 5) defines cultural resistance as 'culture that is used, consciously or unconsciously, effectively or not, to resist and/or change the dominant political, economic and/or social structure'. If, as he goes on to argue, politics is essentially a cultural discourse derived from socially constructed rituals, symbols and understandings, it follows that cultural practice may be utilized to subvert or challenge the norms of political discourse. This is an important point for community development. For example, rather than assuming that communities and individuals, with their low rates of participation in electoral and development processes, are pathologically apathetic or disengaged, we need to pay closer attention to the practices of everyday life in order to discern the values and commentaries that infuse them (de Certeau 1984). We need, in other words, to grasp what captures people's imagination rather than to lament or penalize their passivity towards normative democratic practices from which they are to a large extent excluded.

Cultural resistance theorists draw attention to the covert or implicit strategies through which social actors articulate a sense of self or contest both low level and grand scale oppressions (e.g. Kelley 1996). What Duncombe (2003) describes as a 'politics that doesn't look like politics' incorporates cultural practices – including style, attitude, jokes, artistry, participation in gangs, graffiti, outlaw status – through which oppositional identities may be nurtured and expressed. Similarly, James Scott (1990) argues that between the poles of political activism and disengagement other resistant strategies may be employed. He points to what he terms 'hidden transcripts of resistance':

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discourse that takes place "offstage", beyond direct observation by powerholders…it consists of those offstage speeches, gestures and practices that confirm, contradict, or inflect what appears in the public transcript (Scott, 1990; 4).

The naming and contestation of (pre-)public woes often occurs within the safety of close social, family or community networks; oppositional solidarities are forged and reinforced in comparatively privatized spheres where the force of dominant power relations is felt less acutely or in which politics becomes deeply personal. Theories of cultural resistance, therefore, force us to interrogate if and how community development or community arts may be overly prescriptive in their efforts to engineer democracy, how they may in fact trample over indigenous 'practice', practice that defies *their* conventions of what it is to be an active citizen. Such theories also remind community arts and development workers of the importance of deep and open-minded engagement with communities and of the necessity to create mutually respectful educational relationships. Ironically, the interventionist practitioner's gaze may be too superficial and too myopic to recognize the questioning and critical intelligences that animate these cultural gestures.

Consumerism and consumption, what place for creativity and imagination?
In the current climate, democracy can too easily become conflated with the market, but if we are to think more dialectically we need to think about consumption more carefully and purposefully: to explore consumption for its democratic or subversive spaces. An appreciation of cultural resistance and its place in democracy forces us to try to come to terms with the place of consumption in contemporary society. Given the centrality of the consumer role for citizens, it is to be expected that much of their cultural and political preferences will be articulated in and through consumption.

Concepts of cultural democracy and resistance are attractive insofar as they highlight the creative and activist potentialities of citizens and, as such, they may also show the potential for people to transcend the limitations of consumerism. It is often assumed, for example, that while people are buying, watching or selecting, they are not making or doing or even being. We suggest that such a conclusion is both premature and somewhat simplistic. It is important to deconstruct the idea of consumerism in order to recognize its dialectical tendencies; tendencies that may constrain particular forms of cultural action and may enable or support others. It may be the case that the role of 'the consumer' is less deterministic or infantilizing than we think;

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that the polarization of consumer and creator may occlude possibilities for creativity through consumption or for politically effective forms of consumer action.

In the Republic of Ireland, most obviously in the context of the current recession but even during the heady days of the Celtic Tiger, moralizing discourses about consumerism's grip on the collective psyche have become ritualistic. These discourses emphasize consumerism's inevitably corrosive effects on the spiritual, community and cultural lives of the population (e.g. Bohan 2009; Department of Education and Science 2003), with Irish President Mary McAleese emerging as a high-profile critic of this shift in collective values:

> I think that everyone of us would have to say with our hands on our hearts that we were all consumed by that same element of consumerism…Somewhere along the line, we began to think that we weren't happy with deferred gratification. … And now the balance presumably is going to swing back the other way and it will be no harm. (Mary McAleese, Irish Times, Tuesday, Dec 16, 2008).

It is evident that the sheer pervasiveness of consumerism ensures that previously sequestered spaces – the body, the school, the family or childhood itself – are now identified as fair game for commodification and incessant marketing (Cook 2007). Even our mental and physical health is endangered as our pleasure seeking culminates in an 'obesity crisis' and the 'scourge of binge drinking'. The inclusive 'we' is, however, misleading: as Michael Aaronovitch points out, 'such worries rarely afflict the wealthy – always the moral panic about consumption is about the lower orders […] the banker isn't the target' (*The Times* 24 January 2009). In addition, as Lenihan(2006) observes, moralizing discourses rarely acknowledge or interrogate the economic, political and geographical factors that shape individual behaviour. Consumerism may be bad for the culture but it is consistently represented as an imperative for the economy, with the decline of 'consumer confidence' generally regarded as an indicator of recession. Similarly, social geographers such as Valentine (2001: 227) remind us that urban development and community regeneration processes have been instrumental in 'reorganizing cities around consumption rather than production' (see also Minton 2009).

Such considerations are suggestive of both the 'hegemony' of consumption in contemporary society and its dialectical character. Indeed, theories of consumer society generally argue that we – in late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries – occupy a distinct historical period in

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which 'consumption' is the primary frame of reference for our behaviours and emotions (Bauman 2007a, 2007b; Gilbert 2008). In other words, it is largely through consumption that our social identities are forged and it is increasingly difficult – if not impossible – to conceive of human desires, emotions or needs as 'prior to', 'outside of' or 'distinct from' consumer relationships. In line with neo-liberal ideology, *freedom* is defined as freedom to consume and to resist the consumerist imperative becomes tantamount to a refusal of freedom. Consumers pick and choose from ready-made images and commodities in a cycle without end. Likewise, things – including cultural artefacts and the arts – are not celebrated for their durability or their ability to speak to some longstanding fundamental need; in 'liquid modernity' '[E]verything is disposable, nothing is truly necessary, nothing is irreplaceable' (Bauman 2007a: 123–24

Bauman's critique reflects some of the long-standing preoccupations of the Frankfurt theorists (Adorno 1991; Horkheimer and Adorno 1972), among them the concern that the character of the cultural sphere is overdetermined by the logic of capitalism and is therefore profoundly undemocratic. Perhaps, however, there are less deterministic ways of seeing consumer culture. In their bleak diagnoses, Bauman and the Frankfurt theorists do not really address what it is that people do with culture when they receive it. Contemporary cultural products may have degraded origins, their substance and presentation may owe more to the profit motive than any aesthetic vision and they may be designed for easy disposal and replacement, but that does not mean that their use or applications can be predicted reliably. Among recognised or aspiring artists the previously controversial use of 'found objects' is now commonplace. Bland or uninteresting mass produced items are re-appropriated and re-made when they are invested with unexpected meaning: Duchamp's humble 'Urinal/Fountain' brazenly defied received notions of authorship and quality, while Oppenheim's 'Object' suggested that cups and saucers could be receptacles for all kinds of alarming possibilities. In the context of the gallery, where we are conscious of being addressed by 'artists', it is easier to recognise as purposeful such efforts to re-animate consumer goods. However, the capacity to subvert or appropriate might be traceable across our societies, discernible in more low-key and everyday contexts.

In summary, critiques of consumer society may dismiss consumption too readily as an inherently passive role. For advocates of cultural democracy, a remaining challenge is to recognise and critically engage with more artful and active forms of consumption, as ordinary people negotiate and re-define the purposes of the objects they buy or, indeed, the democratic arrangements they are sold (See Willis, 1990). Otherwise we are at risk of repeating the same

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fallacies that guide those forms of democratic engineering and community development that were noted earlier, i.e. the assumption that there is little meaningful going on in communities save what is delivered or unleashed by well-meaning interventions.

Conclusion

> [Art] can be used to free people or to constrain them, to empower them or to weaken them, to include or to exclude them … [art] can act to reinforce the status quo and conform people to the logic of the present system. Or [it]can be a powerful tonic for the imagination and a necessary resource for progressive social change. (Thompson, 2002: 24)

Simply put, the arts cannot transcend socio-economic context by the force and will of their craft alone, but they can awaken people to both the negative and positive spaces which it opens up. We are reminded of Dewey's comparison of the aesthetic with the 'anaesthetic' (numb, imperturbable, unmoveable), and the power of art to 'break through the crust of conventionality … reject the static, the automatic, the merely habitual' (Dewey, 1958, p.48). At their best, the arts can enable those most removed from the formal structures and institutions of power to communicate to those in power on their own terms in their own interests. The same can of course be said of community development itself.

In exploring the potential of and for socially committed arts practice, we would argue that there is a need to invigorate the concept of 'cultural democracy'. In our view culture must be defined in broad and inclusive terms as the making of meaning through every day living and through more specialised intellectual or artistic processes (Williams, 1958/1989). Therefore, our conception of cultural democracy accepts that cultural production is central to human experience not just by right, but as an 'evolutionary necessity' (Fyfe, 2007). It is also borne of recognition of the centrality of consumption in contemporary society, where consumer impulses are less a matter of moral character than they are responses to a complex web of structural and social forces. While we may have some choice regarding the specifics of what we consume, we may have little choice but to *be* consumers. In this context to assert the values of collectivity and productivity – values that are central to cultural democracy – is to strike a note of opposition against the current hegemony.

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Our conception of cultural democracy, therefore, allows for the possibility that the multiple practices of resistance that occur within communities may contain an (albeit latent) political dimension. Without committed attention to identifying and exploring such practices, they may remain invisible to community and arts workers or dismissed as deviant or pathological. In this sense, we recognize that through their everyday lives and within the parameters of their consumer role, citizens will artfully and imaginatively react to, reclaim and refashion commodities and experiences. The challenge is to locate the transformative and radical potential in such practices. We therefore hope that community development can serve as a space within which otherwise atomized or individualized resistances might be supported to become part of a *common* democratic culture. In so doing, community development's advocates may need to resist their own impulses to filter this culture solely through the tired institutions and procedures that now dominate the field.

In conclusion, this article argues for a more expressive and expansive understanding of culture, citizenship and democracy. It seeks to reaffirm the importance of imagination, creativity and emotion in sustaining and enriching community development, particularly given the inexorable rise of a managerialist and programmatic culture of practice. Reviving the democratic imagination is simultaneously a political, a professional and an educational task. As Maxine Greene (1995: 6) puts it:

> All depends upon a breaking free, a leap and then a question … the educative task is to create situations in which people are moved to begin to ask, in all the tones of voice there are, 'why'?

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Government and Community Development in Ireland: The Contested Subjects of Professionalism and Expertise

Rosie R. Meade

Abstract

This paper historicises the recent and ongoing professionalisation of community development in the Republic of Ireland. The term professionalisation refers both to the designation and accreditation of a distinctive community work occupation *and* a wider set of processes that effect more strategic approaches to the planning, delivery and evaluation of community organisations. The paper reviews some tensions associated with professionalisation; tensions that closely relate to community work's reputation as a 'bottom-up' or 'participatory' strategy. It also interrogates community development's place as a strategy of government in contemporary Ireland. In so doing it re-considers the assumed separateness and distinctiveness of the state and community sectors, arguing that the state has been centrally implicated in calling the community sector into being. In their turn community development organisations have shaped and mediated policy delivery on the ground. It is these processes of hybridisation, co-operation, antagonism and struggle that have given professionalisation its momentum.

Rosie R. Meade

Introduction; Community Development as Government

> The tradition of community work in the Republic of Ireland and in the North of Ireland is vocational and professional, paid and unpaid. A distinct discipline and ethos has evolved, committed to working professionally and collectively with communities for change, inclusion and equality. The discipline is strong in its dedication to networking, solidarity and engagement with all of the stakeholders including central government and local authorities (Ad hoc Group 2008:12-13)[24]

This statement constructs community development as a unique and committed form of practice that is inherently oriented towards democratic and participatory outcomes. The statement also emerges out of and reveals something important about the contemporary social sphere in the Republic of Ireland[25], where community development is claimed both as a form of welfare intervention and of grass-roots activism by a diverse range of statutory, community-based and service provision organisations. In a context where the practice of community development articulates plural and often disputed meanings and expectations, the Ad Hoc Group's document 'Towards Standards for Quality Community Work' (2008:18) is one attempt to specify community work's[26] distinctive 'knowledge, skills, qualities, values and practice principles' in order to protect its integrity irrespective of the setting within which it is deployed. Significantly, the document seeks to reconcile its view of community development as a progressive praxis with the concern that it be 'professionally robust and effective', that there should be 'standards for professional community work' and its expectation that the identification of those standards is a first step towards 'developing a framework for the endorsement of community work education and training' (Ad Hoc Group 2009:29).

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[24] The Ad Hoc Group came together in 2005 and involved representatives of organisations with a commitment to community development in both the Republic and the North of Ireland. Participating organisations included; Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action, National University of Ireland, Maynooth, Ulster People's College, Community Workers Co-operative, Community Action Network, POBAL, Combat Poverty Agency and University of Ulster Jordanstown (Ad Hoc Group 2008: 6-7)

[25] I am using 'Ireland' as shorthand for the Republic of Ireland throughout the paper. Where the North of Ireland is also referenced, the term 'Island of Ireland' is used.

[26] Here the terms community development and community work are used interchangeably, as is the common practice in the Republic of Ireland.

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This paper historicises the recent and ongoing professionalisation of community development in the Republic of Ireland, a tendency that emerged during 1970s but became pronounced over the last two decades. In practice professionalisation is associated with a number of co-existing and related trends including: the displacement of activists or volunteers by paid staff; university level accreditation of an expanding community work profession, what Bondi (2005:509) calls 'academicisation'; the creation of a policy active community sector; participation by local and national community sector organisations in formal partnerships with the state; targeted state funding for community initiatives; the deployment of community development programmes as social inclusion strategies; and an ever growing emphasis on managerialism and accountability within the sector (Ad Hoc Group 2008; Bane 2009; Bondi 2005; Daly 2008; Forde 2009; Fyfe 2005; Meade 2005; Motherway 2006; Whelan 1989). The term professionalisation calls to mind the designation and accreditation of a distinctive community work occupation, and the Ad Hoc Group (2008) document is a tentative move towards the creation of a system of self-regulation for community workers. This paper acknowledges, however, that professionalisation also encompasses a wider set of processes that (re)shape community groups into more formalised organisations and effect more strategic approaches to the planning, delivery and evaluation of social inclusion technologies[27]. Borrowing from Escobar (2005:45), this broader concept of professionalisation relates to the ways by which community development, and related practices, have been imbued with the politics of expert knowledge, how they are situated within a distinct and highly specialised 'social sphere', and how they appeal to consciously 'rational' forms of intervention.

This paper reviews some debates associated with the professionalisation of community development; debates that centre on its reputation as a 'bottom-up' or 'participatory' strategy. But this analysis goes beyond an inventory of professionalisation's pros and cons by interrogating community development's place as a technique of government in contemporary Ireland. Irrespective of the wide-ranging and often divergent expectations of its likely achievements, community development is typically defined as a participatory process that can *empower* socially excluded individuals and communities (Department of Social Community

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[27] The word technologies is chosen deliberately in this context and it is used in a Foucauldian (1991) sense, to situate the goal of 'social inclusion' against an appreciation of the myriad 'technologies of government'. Rose (1999:52) explains that those 'technologies are imbued with aspirations for the shaping of conduct in the hope of producing certain desired effects and averting certain undesired events'.

and Family Affairs 2000; Lee 2006; Motherway 2006). In Ireland, as elsewhere, discourses of empowerment are imbricated within broader policy developments, whereby the state is no longer expected to satisfy all its population's needs but instead is recast as 'the facilitating state, the enabling state or the state as animator' (Rose 1999:174). The Government White Paper 'A Framework for Supporting Voluntary Activity' explicitly declared the State's role to be that 'of enabler' (Department of Social Community and Family Affairs 2000:132) in the interests of 'a more participatory democracy where active citizenship is fostered' (2000:14). Significantly, such exhortations of 'active citizenship' also chimed with efforts by successive governments to institute the economic and social policy reforms that would service a 'competitive, liberalised market economy' (Kirby 2002:162); in other words, neo-liberalism Irish style. Nonetheless, while I acknowledge the importance of a political-economic analysis to a fuller appreciation of the factors that have shaped the growth of the Irish community sector and the social conditions to which it must respond, this paper focuses on the status of community development itself; how it came to be deployed as a technique of government and the contests and dilemmas this has engendered.

While contemporary conceptions of neo-liberalism or active citizenship are suggestive a more peripheral role for *the Government*, we should, as Wendy Larner (2000:6) warns, be careful of concluding that there is by implication 'less governance'. Foucault's (1991) concept of governmentality calls attention to the multiple ways by which power serves not to repress conduct but to vitalise it or call it into being. Accordingly, to govern is to 'conduct conduct' (Rose and Miller 2008:14) and the will to govern is predicated on the diagnosis of problems - such as community disempowerment or exclusion - that must be managed, solved or resolved. Community development thus becomes a technique through which the more strategic purposes of a diverse range of actors, within the state system and civil society, may be realised. This conceptualisation of government also emphasises that the public enactment of power does not occur in crudely hierarchical ways, with the state as sole determining arbiter, but that individuals, families and communities absorb, assume, resist, claim and interface with power and that they too are implicated in the character, form and techniques of government within any given society. It is as Kim McKee observes (2009:468) an 'older and more comprehensive meaning of government' as ranging across a 'continuum' where problems to be managed might relate to the most private or intimate aspects of life and the most public or high profile of issues.

It is in this sense that community development with its aspirations to create empowered, active

or participative citizens can be understood as a technique of government. As such it addresses and seeks to recruit subjects as 'self-responsible' but also 'as subject to certain emotional bonds of affinity' (Rose 1996/2008:91) that are expressed as an active allegiance to place, issue or identity based forms of collectivity. It also re-orients the terrain of governmental action and intervention away from the single and unified sphere of the nation – or what Rose (1996/2008:90) calls 'government from the social point of view' - towards a more diversified, pluralised and particularised sphere of co-existing but discrete communities. In Ireland, however, where discourses of community, parish and locality have a long-standing popular currency (O'Carroll:2002) and where non-state actors have been key welfare providers in a subordinated social sphere, there is a definite historical continuity in contemporary celebrations of active citizenship.

The contested terrain of state/community sector relationships in the Island of Ireland has generated considerable academic interest (Forde 2009; McVeigh 2002; Meade 2005; Murphy 2002; Robson, 2000). Terry Robson (2000:224), applying a Gramscian analysis, explores how even apparently 'radical' community organisations, may contribute to an extension of the 'hegemonic values of the state' as they become submerged in the bureaucracy of contemporary practice. In analysing community development's place as a technique of government this paper adopts a more Foucauldian approach and re-considers the assumed separateness or distinctiveness of the state and community sectors. It highlights how the state has been centrally implicated in calling the community sector into being and how, in their turn, community organisations have shaped and mediated policy delivery on the ground. Professionalisation has gained momentum from the varying experiences of hybridisation, co-operation, antagonism and power struggle that occur at the interface of these supposedly discrete sectors, and some related issues are discussed in later sections. Ultimately, this is not the story of the seamless rise to recognition of a community work profession; instead this story is punctuated by reversals and antimonies that relate to contests over expertise, evidence and the relative significance of the social sphere and its relationship to the economic.

A Pre-History of Professionalised Community Development
The antecedents of what is now called community development can be traced to the 19th Century co-operative and land-agitation movements and to the emergence of the rural self-help movement, Muintir Na Tire, in the 1930s. Although they diverged in their higher purposes and

use of tactics, each of these movements sought to engage rural dwellers in collective action in order to protect and sustain their livelihoods. They reflected what Curtin and Varley (2002:21) call 'radical communitarian populism', in so far as they challenged political and state elites, embodied a 'participative organizational culture' and focused on 'concrete projects'. In its efforts to reverse rural decline in the face of modernisation, emigration and industrialisation, Muintir promoted the Catholic social teaching of subsidiarity, according to which the state should desist from intervention in areas of life and welfare that could be provided for by families and communities (Devereux 1993; Curtin and Varley 2002). Community development was invoked by its founder, Father John Hayes, as a unifying social force that could mobilise rural parishes in the name of survival through mutual aid. More practically he exhorted communities to organise local guilds that would provide for their educational, cultural and infrastructural needs. Similar activities are undertaken by today's community development projects; although in the 1930s the now irrepressible discourses of empowerment and social inclusion had yet to make their presence felt.

Talk of self-help or subsidiarity was not just the preserve of Muintir and its parish guilds. It reflected more general tendencies in Irish social policy in the post-independence period where welfare schemes evolved slowly and state intervention around issues such as unemployment, housing or poverty reduction tended to be ad hoc or precipitated by crisis (Considine and Dukelow 2009; Dukelow 2002; Ferriter 2009). The post-colonial Free State retained many features that had been implanted under British rule, including a centralised approach to economic planning, a privileged role for the Department of Finance and a conservative fiscal outlook. In this context, the 'social' as a sphere of government (Miller and Rose 1992/2008) was constituted by the actions and interventions of voluntary bodies, the churches, cultural movements and community organisations, most notably in the health and education fields. 2009's shameful Ryan Report (2009), which catalogued neglect and abuse within church run child 'care' institutions, is just one illustration of the state's readiness to out-source to the religious orders its disciplinary and regulatory functions.

In the period after 1922 we observe the making of an Irish social sphere by multiple architects of government, but it is worth emphasising that this sphere was effectively subordinated to the economic. Clarke (2007:984) usefully explains that the subordination of the social sphere can take a variety of forms; that it generates 'contradictory' and 'uneven' outcomes and practices. From the outset, the processes and pace of Irish social policy formation demonstrated that the

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'needs of the economy' would always be treated as pre-eminent, with welfare approached either as an afterthought or *'subjugated'* (Clarke 2007:975) in the interests of competitiveness or austerity. The subordination of the social sphere also means '*domesticating the social'* (Clarke 2007:976), whereby welfare issues are treated as private concerns, best resolved in and by the family. Confirmation of the special place of 'the family'[28] was locked into the 1937 Constitution and the notorious Mother and Child[29] debacle of 1951 demonstrated the discursive power of familism as a bulwark against collectivised forms of health care. Even as more consciously interventionist state welfare schemes began to emerge during the 1960s – e.g. the universalisation of access to post-primary education - such moves were rationalised with reference to their future benefits for labour market participation and inward investment (O'Sullivan 2005). In this sense state policy also '*functionaliz[ed] the social'* (Clarke 2007:976); its worth and effectiveness were predicated on its potential contribution to economic growth, rather than on any other inherent benefits.

Against this historical backdrop more professionalised forms of community development emerged during the 1970s and 1980s. The pluralised and expanding social sphere provided a home for the discourses and techniques of community empowerment and inclusion. In its turn, community development contributed to the extension and re-shaping of governmental strategies by reaching into marginalised communities through adult education classes, job clubs, local employment schemes and a range of other cultural and social initiatives. But given the subordinated status of the social sphere itself, those very factors that contributed to the incorporation of community development within state policy, would make it vulnerable to retrenchment if and when economic priorities changed.

In the Republic of Ireland community development was formally constituted as a technique of anti-poverty policy with the implementation of the first EEC Anti-Poverty programme, officially launched in 1975. Its form was influenced by the 'rediscovery' of Irish poverty in

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28 Articles 41.1.2°: 'The State, therefore, guarantees to protect the Family in its constitution and authority, as the necessary basis of social order and as indispensable to the welfare of the Nation and the State.'

29 The 'Mother and Child scheme' was a proposal by Minister for Health, Dr Noel Browne to introduce non-means tested free health care for all mothers and children up to the ages of 16, regardless of family circumstances. It generated opposition from the Catholic hierarchy and the medical profession.

1971[30], the US War on Poverty and the British Home Office Community Development Projects of the 1960s (National Committee on Pilot Schemes 1981). The EEC programme was overseen by a 'National Committee' and involved twenty-four separate schemes, including thirteen pilot community action projects. Significantly, it also involved the training and employment of seventeen 'field staff' to 'develop, plan and supervise the various local projects and to enable them to develop an appreciation and knowledge of their role and responsibilities in this work' (National Committee 1981, 102)[31]. As the training programme sought to shape the subjectivities of the community workers, the projects themselves sought to responsibilise and shape the self-images of local people. Projected outcomes included: 'to enable people to work together'; 'to help people become conscious of the structures, services, attitudes that constitute the fabric and dynamic of the institutions in society which control, order and regulate their lives' and; 'to kindle a mood of self-confidence, assertiveness a sense of identity and of self-value among disadvantaged groups' (National Committee 1981:191). Previous forms of community action had also demonstrated, if not consciously articulated, a 'will to empower' (Cruickshank 1999), but with this programme a distinctive role was carved out for trained community workers as central animators of these processes of individual and collective change.

Nonetheless this programme did not herald the mainstreaming of professional community work or community development approaches. In practice, employment opportunities were often tied to time-limited pilots, such as the second European Anti-poverty programme, or to small-scale initiatives that received residual state funding. From 1977 the regional Health Boards, as they were then known, began to employ small numbers of community workers to process grants and support voluntary social service organisations. This effectively meant the continued domestication of aspects of the social, insofar as essential preventive and respite care were still provided by family, voluntary and community groups. However, it also ensured that the social sphere was infused with a new 'rational' spirit as it became the subject of oversight by state employed community workers. Despite the paltry levels of funding and the absence of a coherent state policy for resourcing community work, Irish government discourses emphasised the positive contribution community organisations could make to poverty reduction in the

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[30] This is a reference to a paper presented by Seamus O'Cinnéide at the Kilkenny conference, in which he estimated that a quarter of the population lived in poverty (National Committee 1981)

[31] This programme had a chequered history and the Final Report makes for fascinating reading as a review of some of the issues that emerged. Interestingly, Final Report comments that this training, because it was inadequately conceived, had a 'negative and divisive effect on the programme as a whole' (1981:103)

recessionary years of the 1980s. With the establishment of the Combat Poverty Agency (CPA) by statute in 1986 this link between community development and social inclusion was made explicit and the agency was charged with;

> 'the collection and dissemination of information on poverty and community development and acting as a centre for counselling and training in relation to, and for assisting, encouraging and the giving of information on, community development as a means of overcoming poverty' [Government of Ireland 1986:Section 4(2)(c)][32];

Likewise, it would be inaccurate to assume that the form and purpose of community mobilisation was determined solely by the policies of central government. Between the 1960s and 1980s there were alternative approaches to local empowerment that were comparatively, if not absolutely, independent of state programming. These included community councils, parish hall building initiatives, cultural and economic co-operatives and social service committees. There were also numerous activist groups – e.g. Coiste Cearta Síbialta na Gaeilge, National Tenants Organisation, Dublin Housing Action Committee and Concerned Parents Against Drugs - that deployed protest tactics in pursuit of overtly contentious social agendas and directly challenged dominant economic and development discourses. However as Hindess (in Rose 1996/2008:92) observes, even when they are deeply rooted in real-life places, community organisations typically wrestle with the 'Janus-faced logic' of activism. Activists rationalise their public interventions with reference to the needs or wants of communities that 'already exist' but the members of those communities are implicitly defined as insufficiently aware of their necessary 'allegiance' (Rose 1996/2008:92) to those collectivities. Notably, some groups - although by no means all - that initially exhibited a kind of outlaw status became more institutionalised over time, as their later incarnations began engaging with state funding and partnership structures.

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[32] Since 1986 the Combat Poverty Agency had responsibility for promoting research and policy development to address issues of poverty in Ireland. It was also an advocate for community development as a social inclusion strategy. In summer 2008 Minister Mary Hanafin at the Department of Social and Family Affairs made provision for a review of its activities and it has since been amalgamated with the Office for Social Inclusion to form the Social Inclusion Division in the Department of Social and Family Affairs; thus losing its independent status

In 1990 the then Minister for Social Welfare, Michael Woods, launched the Community Development Fund (CDF) to provide grant assistance for the creation of community resource centres and the employment of project co-ordinators in fifteen areas of disadvantage. This initiative would later evolve into the Community Development Programme and by 2010 somewhere in the region of 180 projects were operating in locality based and issue specific communities across the country (Department of Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs 2010:www.pobail.ie). The launch of the CDF therefore represents a key moment in both the expansion of the community development workforce and in bolstering community development's status as a technique of government. Announcing the Fund, Minister Woods explained that projects should emphasise; 'involving local communities in developing approaches to tackling the problems they face and [on] creating successful partnerships between the voluntary and statutory agencies in the area' (see Cullen 1994:2). By 1999 the research consultancy NEXUS was tasked with evaluating the expanding Community Development Programme (CDP) with reference to its key objectives. Among other factors it considered if and how projects had fostered 'the emergence of community leadership in disadvantaged communities and facilitated participation by such communities in … partnerships and other local development and social development initiatives' (NEXUS 2002:6). It also assessed the 'extent to which people have been enabled, by involvement in activities funded under the Programme, to progress further to mainstream job education and training opportunities' (NEXUS 2002:6). Official policy discourses therefore emphasised the CDP's role, in empowering, responsibilizing and activating citizens (see Clarke 2005) to assume subjectivities appropriate to the economic and social climate of the day. Individually, citizens would work their way out of poverty and into inclusion: collectively, they would become partners in government.

As Kieran Allen (2007 56) has observed, during the 1990s social partnership became a kind of hegemonic shorthand for the 'national good', while its critics were largely dismissed as naysayers or slaves to outdated 'ideology'. Charging former combatants, such as employers and unions, with collective responsibility for economic planning and individual responsibility for disciplining their respective sectors, partnership played a crucial role in normalising neo-liberalism in Ireland. The institutionalisation of partnership – from the late 1980s - coincided with an unprecedented assault on public spending by the Charles Haughey led government and the partnership agreements rationalised and set in motion a regime of low corporation taxes, unconditional

industrial peace, competiveness, flexibilisation of the work force and public sector 'reform' (Allen 2000; Allen 2007; Kirby 2002). Throughout that decade and into the 21st century the national trend was mirrored at the local, and in name of social inclusion, social cohesion, and local government renewal, a succession of policies provided for the creation of a complex infrastructure of area-based partnerships[33]. Indeed, one of the declared purposes of successive national agreements was to extend the practice of partnership across the economic and social spheres (Kirby 2002). Local partnerships deployed community workers on the ground and were managed by coalitions of business, trade union, statutory and local spokespeople. Here too the emphasis was on problem solving strategies that would deny or transcend *a priori* political and economic cleavages: the practice of giving recognition to different sectors reflected an effort to contain inequalities of power and resources, rather than to resolve them (Allen 2000; Allen 2007; Kirby 2002; Meade 2005; Murphy 2002).

In 1996 a Community and Voluntary Pillar was created to sit alongside the already existing Trade Union, Farming and Business pillars, for the 'Partnership 2000' discussions. This place had been staked out and claimed by a range of organisations that lobbied for the right of a distinct sector to represent constituencies, such as women, Travellers, migrants, young people and the socially excluded (Meade 2005). In so doing, these organisations asserted that partnership could embody alternative rationalities, associated with concepts of justice, democracy, recognition and social equality. Irrespective of the actual influence it was able to exert, the creation of this

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[33] The second national partnership agreement 'The Programme for Economic & Social Progress' (1991) made provision for the creation of local partnerships in 12 designated areas. This programme was later extended to include 38 'Area Based Partnerships' and 33 additional 'Community Groups'. It subsequently became known as the *Local Development Social Inclusion Programme*. *European Structural Fund Programmes* (1994-1999) also contributed to the extension of partnership approaches in community development e.g. LEADER 1 and 2, New Opportunities for Women (NOW), INTEGRA and URBAN. *The Task Force Report on the Integration of Local Government and Local Development Systems (Aug 1998)*, lead to the creation new partnerships allied to local government; i.e. County and City Development boards (after 2000). In 2001, the RAPID (Revitalising Areas by Planning, Investment & Development) programme was launched to focus on integrated development and social inclusion in 25 of the most disadvantaged areas of the state. Again it emphasised partnership and was connected into local government system.

Pillar represented a kind of victory for organisations that had sought official recognition for the sector and its particular expertise. It also suggests that social partnership and its techniques were not merely products of a top-down imposition of the neo-liberal agenda, but were also expressions 'of successful campaigns to decentralise decision-making' (Bondi 2005:500) and broaden participation in the policy field.

The net result has been a tangible increase in the visibility and size of the community sector, but with that sector largely dependent on state funding for its survival. The Hidden Landscape Survey (Donoghue et al 2006) found that the state is the most important source of income for all non-profits, including charities and community development groups, with 58.9% of total income emanating from this source. In this somewhat 'manufactured civil society' (Hodgson 2004; Meade 2005) workers are employed directly by local management committees, but financed by the state; projects assert a primary allegiance to local places but are typically integrated within more general programmes. To avail of the advocacy, resource and policy-making opportunities that engagement with the state promises, groups must clarify legal structures and managerial systems while demonstrating more strategic approaches to planning and delivery. Professionalisation thus takes on a self-generating momentum and professionals become regarded as indispensible if organisations are to negotiate and manage these complex roles and responsibilities.

Dilemmas of Expertise and the Limits of Professionalism

The Irish community development sector is characterised by significant deviations in terms of pay, working conditions and entry points, with employees displaying a variety of third-level, adult education and experiential credentials. Community work does not yet have a collectively agreed or state recognised qualification, although growing numbers of universities and colleges have been providing professional education and training programmes since the 1980s. As in Aotearoa New Zealand, the creation of such programmes coincided with a surge in participation in third level education, and there is a similar 'symbiotic relationship' (Larner and Craig 2005:411) between the expansion in size and scope of tertiary education and the professionalisation of community development. Furthermore, community work education typically occurs in tandem with the formation of youth workers and in recent years the emphasis of Irish youth work has swung away from universal provision based on a youth club model, towards special projects with demonstrably 'at risk' groups of young people. In line with the responsibilisation of youth work as an instrument of justice, health and education

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policy, many youth workers asked that their skills and inputs be accorded the same professional regard as teachers and social workers (Bane 2009). In January 2006 *the North-South Education and Training Standards Committee for Youth Work* was established for 'the professional endorsement of courses and programmes of education and training' in third level institutions in the island of Ireland (Morgan and Kitching 2009:4). Given their overlap, it will be interesting to observe if and how the processes of professional identity formation associated with accredited youth work training will shape the professional subjectivities of future community workers.

At the risk of reification, professionalisation can be seen to present two principal dilemmas for community work. The first concerns the particular form that professionalisation is taking; suggesting that such processes are not inherently problematic but that state interference and control is corrupting any progressive potential. In particular does the malign influence of partnership, with its protocols and bureaucratic modus operandi, suffocate more creative forms of professional practice (Bane 2009; Loughrey 2002; Shaw 2008)? The second dilemma is more troubling: is professionalism inherently inimical to community development's purpose because it exalts a narrow conception of expertise at the expense of more democratic forms of knowledge exchange? Community development's supporters insist that its stock in trade is the voluntary participation of citizens, as opposed to clients or service users, and the context specific wisdom generated through community membership is the primary resource of action. Consequently Ife (2002:277) holds that '[I]deas of skill sharing, empowerment and the 'community knows best' are simply not compatible with a professional model of practice'.

Since the 1990s community development's participatory claims have been repeated almost unreflexively in state policy documents. The White Paper, '*Supporting Voluntary Activity*' (2000) agreed that community organisations do contribute to a more participatory democracy by providing much needed spaces for the inclusion of voiceless or marginalized constituencies. But, critics argue, the cumulative impact of state patronage may override community development's more democratic potential (Daly 2008; Forde 2009; Gaynor 2009; Meade 2005). This paradox was highlighted by the (now defunct) policy advisory agency the National Economic and Social Forum [NESF] (2003:71) which warned, '[T]oo much control, social engineering or provision of external incentives could negate the very principle of an active civil society'. Such concerns are not peculiar to the Irish case and a range of international commentators have identified similar fault-lines along the borderlands between civil society

and the state (Fyfe 2005; Ife 2002; Markowitz and Tice 2002; Shaw 2008). While professionalisation is not solely reducible to either the influence of partnership or to the increasing availability of state resources, in Ireland these are inter-related and co-incidental processes. Research by Airey (2006) found that CDP personnel claimed a general willingness to become more policy active but their actual policy work tended to encompass a narrow range of activities, such as attendance at conferences, participation in network meetings and engagement with partnership structures. Expectations of the professional responsibilities of workers are being shaped in a context that presents 'partnership' as the default expression for community participation in the public and political spheres. Therefore, active citizenship and community empowerment often translate as engagement with local institutions and adaptation to their formalised routines. For community workers a growing share of their time and energy is dedicated towards managing those relationships (Airey 2006; Fyfe 2005; Lee 2006; Loughrey 2002; Motherway 2006; Murphy 2002); the upshot being, paradoxically, a less autonomous and more bureaucratised community sector

In a revealing and ultimately distorting semantic slippage The White Paper cited Ireland's partnership institutions and processes as evidence of participative democracy in action (Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs 2000). More accurately they can be seen as comparatively privatised spheres where 'select' individuals and groups participate in discussions beyond the radar of broader public commentary (Meade 2005; O'Cinnéide 1998). Partnership reflects a distinctive model of state patronage, where civil society is no longer constituted as 'dependent' or 'separate', but is instead responsibilised as an 'equal' in the technical arts of government. By implication, some organisations are constituted as insiders or partners, and others, the non- or anti- participants as outsiders. Nonetheless, it should be remembered that inclusion in partnership was actively courted by community and voluntary sector organisations because it offered highly prized access to policy-making processes and affirmed their role as representatives of socially excluded groups. These kinds of strategic calculations led many organisations to relate to partnership as if it was 'the only game in town' (Murphy 2002), but it always was just one possible strategy among others. Alternatives might have emphasised conflict over consensus, localised as opposed to state funding, voluntarism over professionalism and all would have generated costs and benefits in terms of autonomy, influence, status and resources. Community sector organisations actively contributed to the normalisation and extension of partnership, but did so for many divergent reasons (Loughrey 2002; Meade 2005; Murphy 2002). Partnership in turn contributed to the normalisation and

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extension of professionalised community development: community workers became its 'strategic brokers' (Larner and Craig 2005) and their skills and expertise became essential to its localised delivery across the nation.

Critiques of professionalised community development can go deeper, raising fundamental questions about the status of citizen as opposed to expert knowledge in its processes and institutions. In Ireland wide-scale acceptance of community development's professional status is still a work in progress, and within the community sector, key actors and organisations have not always been convinced that professionalism is desirable or justifiable. For example, in the 1980s the Community Workers Co-operative argued that;

> The process of professionalisation is about gaining status. It is a search for power, money and control over the practice of community work. It is a process whereby a small group decides on the rules of entry and works to have them accepted and so build up a membership. The profession resulting from this process would be: exclusive with restricted right of entry; self regulating and as such not answerable to the community (cited in Whelan 1989:154)

This analysis resembled that of Ivan Illich (1977:12) who denounced outright the pursuit of professional identity in the social sphere, claiming it 'withered' politics and infantilised voters: we abdicate our citizen power by entrusting 'technocrats' to define public needs and the appropriate means of securing them. Consequently, issues of poverty, inequality and other social contradictions become recast as technical problems, best resolved by the application of expert knowledge and advice. Illich (1977:20) argued that professions come to resemble an exclusive priesthood, the power of which is legitimated from on high, and that each time the state licences the claims of a professional interest group power is transferred from the public sphere into the 'hands of a self-accrediting elite'

By portraying professional expertise as an exclusive possession that is exercised with absolute impunity over and above the citizenry, anti-professional discourses may disregard the efforts workers make to democratise their relationships with communities. Instead of diminishing or actively suppressing community wisdom and retreating away from politics, workers may use their status productively to validate and support more creative forms of practice (Bondi 2005; Shaw 2008). The Ad Hoc Group has explored the possible development of 'a framework for the endorsement of community work education and training' (Ad Hoc Group 2008:29).

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Significantly, the 'Towards Standards' (2008:18) document seeks to offer 'an ethical basis for community work' that can facilitate 'a better understanding of the role and function of community work by all involved and all who come in contact with it'. Defining values such as participation, equality, social justice, collective action and empowerment (2008:22-26) as inherent to its practice, may constitute a pre-emptive ring-fencing of an autonomous and politically committed vision of community development in the face of state interference or funding retrenchment. It may constitute an effort to inscribe alternative or progressive rationalities onto the concept of professionalism itself, so that the community worker's professional identity is grounded in an active repudiation of the kinds of hierarchism that Illich satirises. Furthermore, professionals are themselves 'the targets of professional rationality; they are both the governor and the governed' (Fournier 1999:285). In the name of an avowedly participatory practice, 'Towards Standards' is one attempt to conduct the conduct of future community workers as it seeks to identify foundational values and key skills appropriate to their role.

Ultimately, it is difficult to imagine how community work as a process could ever be immune from expertise. Cruickshank (1999) explains that all assertions of the need for community empowerment, be they 'radical' or 'professional', are born of assessments, sometimes explicit but often unstated, of the needs and desirable outcomes for the groups and individuals involved. Similarly the practices of community work, those sites where the transfers of power that constitute empowerment actually occur, are themselves power relationships. To name people as disempowered or excluded and to seek to engage them in 'improving' activities is always an expression of power and expertise. Of course this, as Cruickshank (1999) observes, does not by necessity render community work wrongheaded or politically suspect, indeed one of the distinctive features of community empowerment strategies is their emphasis on popular or local wisdom. Nonetheless it suggests that professionalism cannot be accepted unquestioningly or monolithically in community work; it is inevitably the site of competing and contested knowledge claims and there is nothing self-evident about its expertise.

At this point, it might be worth asking if the term 'professional community worker' is anything more than a floating signifier, particularly since the practice of community development appears to have such an uneasy relationship with expertise. Community workers must negate or disavow their expert status in order to engage as equals with community members, but they must assert some form of expertise in the context of policy, funding or partnership negotiations

with the state. Given their dependence on public resources, community workers are themselves subjects of and subjected to external oversight.   As Nikolas Rose (1996/2008:108-109) explains, with New Public Management's (NPM) incursions into the social sphere, conceptions of professional expertise have been revised in line with market models; professionals must prove their worth with reference to costs, benefits and outcomes, and must demonstrate their willingness to be subjected to audits and review. In Ireland NPM has been embraced by central government, where there is now talk of 'Transforming Public Services' with reforms underpinned by the following criteria:

> Achieve improved performance by organisations and individuals;
>
> Create flexibility in the deployment of people, assets and other resources;
>
> Identify the precise transformation agenda in each sector and engage and mobilise the necessary actors; and
>
> Achieve   greater   efficiency,   effectiveness   and   economy (http://www.bettergov.ie/eng/Background_Info/)

In this neo-liberal context self-regulation and professional autonomy are decidedly precarious achievements. Significantly, instead of claiming exclusive forms of expertise for community work, the Ad Hoc document (2008:20) underlines its flexibility and openness, while stressing repeatedly its strong value orientation. It names a number of skills as 'core to the practice of community work' and they include, among others, 'research and observation…working with people, empowerment and activation…administration, including fundraising, financial and people management, strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation…leadership, collaborative and partnership working' (2008:20) Aside from being a useful register of the daily demands now made of paid community workers, it also illustrates the extent to which workers' professional roles are bound up with an ability to navigate managerialist responsibilities and procedures.

Unsurprisingly, politically engaged and reflexive community workers will encounter real dilemmas as they attempt to act purposefully within this contested and contradictory terrain. Because of its social inclusion focus community development occurs in those spaces most acutely affected by the withdrawal or absence of public services. It also seeks to empower and activate those citizens who are least likely to be invested in or engaged by existing democratic processes.   One ethical challenge for professional community workers lies in having to name and counter the consequences of neo-liberalism but to do so in the spirit of managerialism so

that they 'make their political claims technical or turn their contests into collaboration' (Larner and Craig 2005:419).

Enablement and Discipline; Reviewing the CDP

For community work to achieve a *bona fide* professional status, its professional claims must be accepted and licensed with the active approval of the state. This raises questions regarding the kinds of practice that the state is prepared to validate and support. It also prompts us to ask whether or not the state has a unified vision of community work's purpose, and if so, what it is. As earlier sections showed, the community and state sectors are neither hermetically sealed nor estranged from each other. The community development sector has been constructed along the interface of the state and independent civil society; it is neither one thing nor the other, and it too is an active agent of governmentality in the Foucauldian sense. With the hegemonisation of partnership from the 1990s, the state represented its own responsibilities to the community sector in comparatively benign terms; most obviously with its claim to 'enable' the sector (Department of Social Community and Family Affairs 2000). Even then there was a certain partiality about this assertion. As funding increased and partnership opportunities were extended, the state sought to enable a particular kind of sector; one that would co-operate in government, abide by the economic consensus and fill gaps in the social sphere (Allen 2000; Allen 2007; Forde 2009; Kirby 2002; Meade 2005). If the state adopted the discourses of participatory democracy, it did so, as the following examples suggest, while demonising and side-lining dissenters and invoking its disciplinary powers to keep organisations in check.

Some members of the Community and Voluntary Pillar voted against the 2003-2005 Social Partnership agreement 'Sustaining Progress', on the grounds that it provided insufficient resources or commitments to the socially excluded and the unemployed. The central government response was to exclude those critics from related institutions as punishment for their breach of etiquette (Meade 2005). Cruder still is an example from 2007 when Pavee Point the Travellers rights and community development organisation was censured and subjected to review by then Minister for Justice Brian Lenihan. It had offered support to an 'illegal' Roma encampment on a Dublin Motorway.

> If their [Pavee Point's] involvement was simply to provide humanitarian assistance
> to these individuals, then I do understand their position. But if their position was that
> these individuals should be permitted to stay here and that we should set aside the
> whole immigration law of the State, and have a back-door entry policy, then that

would be wrong. (Lenihan in Lally and Healy 2007:np)

The Minister was explicit in his assessment of the purpose of projects such as Pavee Point: stick to service provision. However, in its own public statements on this controversy, Pavee Point had never demanded that the government 'set aside' its immigration policy. Instead it consistently stressed that the Roma experienced profound levels of discrimination in Romania, that their living conditions on the M50 were intolerable and asked that the Minster for Justice 'take a humane approach to the families camping in appalling conditions' (Pavee Point June 20th, 2007). The organisation had done precisely what might have been expected of it by a state that was funding it in good faith.

For a Foucauldian analysis it is hugely significant that the minister used the threat of 'review' to put manners on Pavee Point. To 'review' does not necessarily imply 'to close down' or to 'cease funding'. Instead it suggests that the organisation will be reassessed; that it will be evaluated according to its capacity to perform, or that its terms of reference might be re-written. The term perfectly encapsulates how state power serves to simultaneously discipline and enable: how the state seeks not to stop the community sector, but to bring it into line so that it governs and is governed more effectively. In recent years this term 'review' has been invoked a number of times to re-negotiate the purpose of the CDP. Unsurprisingly, these moves have generated anxiety and uncertainty across the community sector and some of the related issues are considered in the final paragraphs of this section.

As noted earlier, the establishment of the CDP was perhaps the most obvious marker that the state accepted community development's potential to empower and activate the socially excluded. In 2003 the Department of Community Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs instituted a review of the CDP - the Community Development Support Programme as it was then named - that was designed to integrate projects more closely within local government and partnership structures (Meade 2005). This was deemed necessary even though NEXUS (2000), the research agency charged with evaluating the programme, had already commented favourably on the ability of projects to meet core objectives. As the review progressed local projects were placed on interim funding, with no guarantee of long term survival, and were forced to submit revised work plans to the Department. The upshot of this review was that local projects were required to submit their annual work-plans for endorsement by the City/County Development Boards, yet another partnership structure located within the local government system. In other words, it generated new bureaucratic procedures for community groups, extended state

surveillance and deepened the influence of institutionalised partnerships within the sector (Meade 2005).

By 2009 Ireland was deep in recession and with that came the inevitable prescriptions of spending retrenchment, public sector cutbacks and social welfare reform. National level partnership negotiations faltered as it became increasingly difficult to reconcile conflicts both within the Trade Union sector itself and between employer and union spokespeople. Even though Ireland's economic collapse was precipitated by hyperactive markets, unregulated financial speculation and irresponsible models of property development – what Kieran Allen (2009) calls 'casino capitalism' - central government sought to responsibilise the citizenry to take 'its share' of the pain. Announcing the 2009 budget, Minister for Finance, Brian Lenihan revitalised the tired old logic of consensus to proclaim the crisis a technical rather than a political matter and to suggest that hardship was an opportunity rather than a threat;

> This Budget serves no vested interest. Rather, it provides an opportunity for us all to pull together & play our part according to our means so that we can secure the gains which have been the achievement of the men & women of this country. It is, a Cheann Comhairle, no less than a call to patriotic action.' (Brian Lenihan October 14th:2008)

Nonetheless the sugary language of togetherness was accompanied by a concerted effort to isolate the public sector as an obstacle to recovery. Its work conditions, pay rates, and spending priorities were subjected to frenzied assessment by media and government commentators; the implication being that public sector workers were shirking their responsibility to adapt to the new economic order and therefore in urgent need of review. In order to rationalise and prescribe the future course of retrenchment a *Special Group on Public Service Numbers and Expenditure Programmes* was established and chaired by economist Colm McCarthy. Its report, which became popularly known as the McCarthy Report (2009), recommended €5.3 billion in savings and staff reductions of 17,300. The veneer of economic expertise was drawn upon to legitimise what was, in effect, a reaction to crisis and there is much that can be said about the neo-liberal rationalities that shaped both the establishment of the committee and its findings. In relation to community development there were a number of specific proposals: abolition of the government department that is home to the CDP, the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs; €10 million reduction in grants for equipment, training and volunteer support; and a €44 million reduction in direct supports for Community Development and Local Development Programmes (McCarthy 2009:37-38). The report also expressed concerns regarding the breadth of the sector and the prevalence of small

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organisations, and it advised closer integration between local projects and local government and partnership structures. Not all of the report's recommendations have been or will be implemented, but the document is a reminder to all community and public sector personnel of their vulnerability as workers and of the continuing subordination of the social sphere to the needs of the economy, however coarsely they are defined.

In September 2009 John Curran, Minister of State at the Department of Community Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, announced that there would be fundamental reforms to the CDP with a new version being ready for 'roll-out in early 2010' (http://www.pobail.ie/en/PressReleases/2009/September/htmltext,9975,en.html).   The new programme would require the integration of existing community development projects and local partnership structures (Local Development Social Inclusion Programme - LDSIP). Prior to this all such local community projects were managed by voluntary management committees, but under the new arrangement those committees would be rendered redundant and projects would effectively become the eyes and arms of local partnerships, charged with delivering 'frontline services to those who need them the most'. Again, it was a revealing statement; reflecting a reconstituted role for community development as service provider rather than voice of local people. The participation of volunteers was also reconstituted as the principle of local management of projects was deposed in the interests of greater centralisation and state oversight.

Can it be assumed that the fate of the CDP was and will be determined solely by financial and economic considerations? As the earlier review from 2003 had suggested, central government already nursed concerns regarding the comparative autonomy of local projects (Meade 2005). In 2008, even before the creation of the McCarthy committee, a newly established *Centre for Effective Services* (CES) was tasked with assessing what constitutes good practice in community development and with marshalling that evidence towards a redesign of the CDP and LDSIP. In its own words, the CES is an 'independent, not-for-profit organisation funded jointly by philanthropy and government…part of a new generation of intermediary organisations across the world working to apply learning from the emerging science of implementation to real world policy and practice' (http://www.effectiveservices.org/). In 2009 it produced a summary 'evidence review' (CES 2009:3) of 'what has emerged as constituting effective (or ineffective) practice in community development' (CES 2009:5) by drawing on international literature, although none of those sources was referenced directly in the summary

report that was made available for public consumption at that time. Those sources were deemed useful despite their failure to include data generated by 'rigorous application of accepted scientific methodologies' or the unlikelihood that any results had been checked 'against a "counterfactual" (CES, 2009:5). Arguably, with the creation of the CES we see a new designation of expertise in community development, one that is being used to discipline and reorient the sector towards national policy goals. Its report is replete with scientific jargon and management-speak. It suggests that it is possible to answer the question 'what works' in community development by bracketing off troubling questions about purpose and politics, and by evading a consideration of how evaluations of success and failure will always be contested. It is a reminder that the guise of 'expertise' can be used to undermine the autonomy of community workers and community development projects, if it pretends that it is possible to posit universal and objective standards, irrespective of the specific circumstances and desires of the communities with which they work

Conclusion

This paper has drawn on Foucauldian conceptions of governmentality to analyse the context and tensions associated with the professionalisation of community development in Ireland. In the aftermath of Independence the Irish social sphere was constituted by changing combinations of actors, schemes, strategies and purposes but its subordinate status has remained constant, irrespective of the peaks and troughs of national economic performance (Dukelow and Considine 2009; Kirby 2002). Since the 1970s the Irish state has actively promoted community development as a technique of government, moves that were influenced by lobbying from local organisations, experiences of anti-poverty programmes elsewhere and the EEC's social agenda. Even when state rhetoric overshadowed its practical commitments, we have witnessed, particularly during the 1990s, a growing investment in community work and an expansion in the range and scope of organisations claiming to adopt its participatory approaches. This does not mean that the character of community development is uniquely determined by the actions and rationalities of the state. Indeed the momentum also swings the other way, with (local) people asserting community identities in order to activate themselves, each other and the state for the purposes of naming and creating solutions to problems. Therefore it appears that the Irish community development sector is located at the interface of state and civil society, that it is a product of the partnerships, oppositions, negotiations, dependencies and power struggles that characterise relationships between those spheres.

Community development is no more an unfiltered voice of the people, than it is an abject victim of state power. More usefully it can be seen as the site and source of a range of what Foucault (1991) might recognise as governmental technologies, that variously seek to empower, responsibilise, include, discipline, reform or mobilise citizens. While state and community organisations often diverge significantly in their political purposes or strategic visions, there has been, since the 1970s, a growing consensus in the social sphere that community development is a productive technique by which to conduct the conduct of socially excluded constituencies. Even when particular programmes or projects have been regarded ambivalently by the Government and their specific practices subjected to review, community development itself has retained its overall status within the social sphere.

It is this that gives momentum to and rationalises the professionalisaton of community development. We must acknowledge also the influence of partnership, in both its ideological and institutional forms, in shaping current expectations of the skills, knowledge and roles of professional community workers. Nationally, partnership greased the wheels of neo-liberalism and offered a hollowed out model of representative democracy in place of more participatory variants. Locally, it bureaucratised community development practice. Nonetheless, the reputation and legitimacy of community development is predicated upon its responsiveness to issues of inequality, democratic deficit or the state's failure to engage citizens. The dilemma for community workers is that, in the context of neo-liberalism and punitive cuts in public expenditure, they must adapt to the processes and practices of managerialism as they seek to counter their effects: they are situated somewhere between the between the rock of resistance and the hard place of co-option.

The hegemonisation of partnership obscured fundamental contradictions in Irish society. It implied that structurally created polarities and hierarchies could be ignored in the interests of consensus; that political concerns could be treated as technical hitches; that competing sectors were equals in the processes of policy making. As it facilitated and evangelised partnership processes, the state reconstituted its own role to that of enabler; supporting active citizenship, allowing communities to do what they do best. But interactions with the state held a parallel disciplinary aspect. Community development organisations were reminded - sometimes subtly, at other times more crudely – of the appropriate rules of engagement: that there were insiders and outsiders in the policy field; that participation was a privilege not a right; that government departments control the purse strings; and that the effectiveness of projects and

programmes was always up for review. The breakdown of national partnership in the face of economic recession and the recent reorientation of the CDP towards a service provision agenda have gone some way towards defusing these myths of collegiality and consensus.

As plans for the re-constitution of the CDPs were publicised, some projects and national organisations engaged in resistance and protest; lobbying politicians and media, organising marches, and seeking out new spaces for solidarity and creativity (www.claimingourfuture.ie/; www.indymedia.ie). In so doing, they attempted to assert the integrity of their participatory vision and to affirm the contribution local projects have made to the Irish social sphere. In these challenging times, an alternative or parallel response from the sector might be to work collectively towards securing community work's professional recognition. In this way its distinctive expertise and values would be validated by the state and embedded in society through accredited education and training. Arguably, without an agreed conception of standards and purposes, community work is ultimately a prisoner of fortune.

I am concerned, nonetheless, that further professionalisation is a risky strategy, not least because the neo-liberal dogmas of managerialism and market relevance actively undermine professional authority and independence. Professionalism also requires a kind of autonomous expertise that community development does not have. Instead, the responsibility to empower citizens or democratise communication, means workers cannot lay claim to an *a priori* professsional status. The participatory values and discourses to which community work appeals legitimise and invite constant renegotiations, and even outright rejection, of the worker's power. Even when their roles demand that they navigate and manage relationships with the state, workers must demonstrate responsiveness to community expectations. These countervailing responsibilities create scope for resistance, negotiation or flexibility in the face of state disciplinary power. If professionalism means submitting to accreditation processes that have been licensed by government departments or their proxies, it would ultimately expose community development to new and more profound forms of state discipline. I fear that, given the disquiet and uncertainty that has been provoked by recent review processes and revised state strategies, this would constitute a potentially counter-productive gamble.

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Worlds turned upside down? - The Older People's Uprising, 2008
Rosie Meade

Introduction

The Government has decided to abolish the automatic entitlement to a medical card for those over seventy who are above the eligibility criteria. Support will be available to this group to help them meet their healthcare costs. An annual cash grant of €400 per person will be paid to those over seventy who do not qualify for a medical card or a GP visit card subject to an income threshold (Brian Lenihan, in Dáil Éireann, 2008a).

Although it was anticipated, Brian Lenihan's budget announcement of 14 October 2008 would kick-start an extraordinary week in Irish politics. The recently promoted Minister for Finance was charged with navigating what he judged 'one of the most difficult and uncertain times in living memory' (Dáil Éireann, 2008a). The still unfolding sub-prime crisis had brought down Lehman Brothers, the US financial services giant, which filed for bankruptcy on September 15th. Ireland's recession was confirmed within ten days by the Central Statistics Office (RTÉ, 2008) and on September 30th Minister Lenihan committed the State to guarantee all banking liabilities for at least two years (see Dukelow, Chapter 9). Prefaced with a grim assessment of the global threats bearing down on the nation, his first budget speech set out the 'historical task' facing the Government and the Irish people as a whole: to stabilise the

economy, rationalise expenditure and rein back ineffective 'universal entitlements' (Dáil Éireann, 2008a). The international scale and rapid pace of events – he remarked 'the world financial system has been turned upside down' - rendered this a crisis rather than the 'soft landing' that was hitherto a mainstay of media prediction (McWilliams, 2008). Nonetheless, Lenihan, invoking the can-do vernacular of the SWOT analysis, exhorted the populace to recognise this 'opportunity for us all to pull together and play our part according to our means' (Dáil Éireann, 2008a). For many older citizens, however, the budget generated alternative or countervailing opportunities: 'pulling together' was re-framed as collective action and solidarity, while 'playing their part' was registered as protest and resistance.

Public commentaries on the recession or citizens' responses to austerity, typically reference the *Older People's Uprising* as an effective if singular demonstration of *people* or '*pensioner power*' (www.herald.ie, 2008). For example, Miriam Lord (2008) of the Irish Times described a 'truly extraordinary' scenario; 'so many elderly people, pillars of their community, committed voters, decent law-abiding men and women, out on the streets laying siege to the Dáil was unprecedented'. More recently Taoiseach Enda Kenny (Dáil Éireann, 2012) evoked his own ambivalent memories of the protests; 'Elderly people were out before when a decision was made about medical cards. They were very articulate and vociferous and knew exactly where the sore point was. Some of those people were in wheelchairs. I do not want to see that'.

The *Uprising* was short-lived relative to the other campaigns that are analysed in this volume (Newman, Chapter 3; O'Connell, Chapter 4), but its lingering significance has been endorsed by Atlantic Philanthropies (2013), among others. Atlantic funds a range of Irish NGOs in the name of a 'robust civil society' and its website frames the protests as evidence that its grantee, the Irish Senior Citizens' Parliament, successfully empowered 'older people to advocate for themselves'. In contrast, while economist Colm McCarthy (2008) recognised *the Uprising's* success as a spectacle - 'an apocalyptic reaction to relatively minor expenditure cuts', 'the pensioner's Woodstock' – it was, he argued, emblematic of the public's wrongheaded refusal to admit the gravity of the economic crisis.

This chapter offers a critical reading of *the Uprising* and its place in recent Irish history. It is not a definitive analysis: it cannot capture the personal significance of this 'event' for individual participants; it offers no insights into the advance organisational work by activists and NGOs that advocate with and for older people; and it is guarded in its assessment of *the Uprising's* overall achievements. Instead, I analyse the forms that resistance took and the extent to which it transgressed or reinforced the clientelist norms of political engagement in

Ireland. More specifically, I interpret *the Uprising's* political and ethical significance with reference to the Foucauldian concept of counter-conduct. This chapter also contextualises the protests, situating them against an appraisal of the fading status of 'universalism' in social policy, a decline that is at least partly linked to the ascendance of neo-liberalism. Moreover, given Ireland's historical unease over universal health care, I critique the peculiar and politicised origins of the over-70s medical card in 2001. The *Uprising* was a defining event for a nation in transition to recession but it also exposed some troubling continuities in Irish political discourse and practice. Among them: the resilience of a 'stroke culture' in the policy arena; the on-going subordination of social policy to economic rationalities; and the deployment of ideological dissimulations to undermine public debate about the substantive character of our welfare state.

'People Power! Pensioners show the way' (WSM, 2008: 1)

In popular recollections of *the Uprising* two key events stand out: Age Action Ireland's (AAI) public meeting of October 21st and the *March on the Dáil* by 15,000[34] older people and supporters that occurred a day later (Indymedia Ireland, 2008). The meeting, originally slated for a Dublin hotel, was moved to St Andrew's Church in order to accommodate an estimated crowd of 1,800. By booing and silencing government spokespersons - most notably Minister of State John Moloney - and cheering opposition politicians, attendees registered an apparently unanimous objection to the budget announcement (Healy, 2008). The following day's march coincided with a student demonstration against college fees and once again a government representative, Máire Hoctor, Minister of State for Older People, was heckled and jeered. Various politicians, including Fine Gael Leader Enda Kenny and Labour's Eamon Gilmore, mingled with protesters at the *March…,* which preceded a Dáil vote on an opposition motion to reverse the proposed change (Carbery, 2008). Demonstrators had been mobilised by the Irish Senior Citizens' Parliament (ISCP) and its president Sylvia Meehan gave a spirited defence of universal entitlement as essential for older people's 'citizenship', 'self-respect' and 'dignity' (Carbery, 2008). The lively scenes moved the Irish Times (2008) to editorialise on 'the return of street politics' as the 'grey generation' reminded politicians of the consequences of ignoring their 'health and wellbeing' even if, as it sanctimoniously opined, the 'rudeness of protesters' undermined their cause somewhat.

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[34] Attendance figures for demonstrations are often disputed and necessarily provisional.

There was, however, more to *the Uprising* than two Dublin/National gatherings.   From budget-day, Joe Duffy's *Liveline*[35] became an animated forum for older people, carers and their lobby groups. Callers described what their medical cards meant to them, vented their anger at Government, disputed its prescription of budgetary cutbacks to older people, and incited others to resist (Liveline, 2008). Marches occurred in Tralee and Clonakilty and an estimated 2000 attended the Campaign for a Real Public Health Service demonstration in Cork on October 18th (Indymedia Ireland, 2008-2009).   Protesters picketed the constituency offices of Minister for Defence, Willie O'Dea, and Minister for Health, Mary Harney, and on October 25th, in order to sustain *the Uprising*'s momentum, 'up to 200 people of all ages braved appalling weather conditions' at a march in Limerick (Limerick Leader, 2008).

In Ireland boundaries between left and right have been blurred by the dominance of a populist and clientelist political culture - exemplified in the 'TD's clinic' - which obliges national legislators to prove their responsiveness to the needs of local constituents (Kirby and Murphy, 2011; O'Carroll, 1987).   Interestingly this same tradition was successfully exploited by protesters as they targeted elected representatives: the ISCP urged members **to** 'Get out There! Get Working! Get talking to your local politicians and demand that this be withdrawn' (Hayes, 2008). A forum of Fianna Fáil councillors responded with an 'emergency' convention in Ballinasloe, making known its 'anger that there would be any possibility of anyone losing their entitlement' and advising the Taoiseach to reconsider the plans (Siggins, 2008).   As they practised their democratic right to protest, many participants in *the Uprising* self-identified as voters – "we voted 4 you now vote 4 us". The implied threat of an electoral backlash by older people fuelled mutterings of rebellion on the backbenches of Fianna Fáil, prompted TD Joe Behan to resign from the party and caused Independent Finian McGrath to withdraw support from the coalition government.

By the time of the *March…* the Government had already wavered in its approach to means-testing yet still refused to concede on the promised abandonment of universality. Instead it proposed self-administered assessments that relied on 'better-off' older people to relinquish their cards.   Public pressure forced repeated revisions of the new eligibility thresholds and as the controversy rumbled on, five alternative versions were publicised. Evidently the budget announcement had been rushed, ministers had not negotiated with the Irish Medical Organisation (IMO) around a fee structure and the Health Service Executive (HSE) struggled to specify the new criteria (Donnellan, 2008a).   This only partly explains the

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[35] Liveline is a popular radio 'phone-in' show on RTÉ.

confusion, however; the revisions were designed to neutralise popular disquiet and Mary Harney reassured the public that only 20,000, as opposed to the previously anticipated 125,000, would lose their cards. The Government's tenacity in disposing of the principle of universality seemed curiously at odds with efforts to minimise the numbers affected, a paradox that would prompt the ISCP (n.d.) to question the deeper purpose of this 'elaborate clerical exercise'.

Undoubtedly, the protests succeeded in preserving the entitlements of many who would otherwise have lost them. *The Uprising* was provoked by a tangible policy change but also reflected concerns about the status of older people in Ireland and the subordination of social provision to the putative demands of the economy. The protests worked what Jessica Kulynych (1997:333) calls the 'dual meaning' of *demonstration.* The first, more typical usage relates to how demonstrations 'point out' or articulate protesters' interests or grievances (*ibid.*). As placards at the *March…* testified,

"Age 85 Need Help to Stay Alive
I Need my Medical Card Please"
"A Budget to Die for"

Alternatively demonstration translates as 'a show' or 'performance' whereby 'defiance [is] embodied in action that flies in the face of acceptability' (*ibid.*). Protests enumerated older people's fears, arguments and demands but also *demonstrated* their capacities for transgressive and resistant conduct. Ageist constructions of older people as passive, passé or burdensome were countered by protesters who embodied the activist role. Carrying banners declaiming 'Older and Bolder' or wearing tee-shirts with the AAI logo they performed their shared spirit of collective purpose, while, for some at least, picketing clinics or shouting down TDs signified a willingness to transgress the polite norms of political engagement.

The Uprising also revealed the breadth and force of an older people's lobby and its political efficacy. National organisations like AAI and the ISCP played a central mobilising role, but even at the *March…* protesters demonstrated local affiliations – "The Banner Fights Back", "National Widows Association Drogheda Branch", "Tara Disabled Mineworkers and Pensioners". This underscored the geographical range and legitimacy of their resistance while simultaneously putting TDs and councillors on notice. It also tapped into popular disquiet regarding the quality and accessibility of Irish health services, disquiet that had not been allayed by the economic boom of the preceding decade.

Economising and politicising the medical card

Condemnation of Ireland's two-tier or 'apartheid' (Burke, 2009) health services is commonplace. The health system itself is complex; private and public services coexist and even overlap, and entitlements are finely graduated so that only a minority qualify for free access to primary services via the medical card regime[36]. According to the WHO/European Observatory on Health Systems and Health Policies (2012:60) 'Ireland is the only EU health system that does not offer universal coverage of primary care'. While there are seams of universalism within the system[37], in its character and functioning it actively promotes inequality. Most obviously, private medical insurance legitimises accelerated admittance to a raft of secondary services (Burke, 2009). Orla McDonnell and Órla O'Donovan's (2009) research traces the anti-welfarism that informed the promotion of private health insurance during the 1950s and explores how policy-makers continue to represent it as a marker of moral responsibility and community solidarity today. In effect individuals and families are responsibilised to demonstrate their consumer sovereignty and self-sufficiency by insuring themselves against risk, and in so doing relieve the State, fellow citizens and the public system of the 'weight' of their dependency (*ibid.*).

Ostensibly selective entitlement to medical cards seems redistributive, ring-fencing free access to services for those whose medical needs outweigh their individual capacities to pay. Problematically, however, means tests impose arbitrary lines between those who qualify and those who do not: marginal improvements in earnings can render former recipients illegible, and this very prospect emerged as a recurring anxiety for *Liveline* callers on budget day. Although means-testing is typically rationalised with reference to its effectiveness at targeting the *neediest*, the success of Ireland's health system is questionable in this regard. Research suggests that the proportion of the population entitled to medical cards fell during the Celtic Tiger period because income thresholds did not keep pace with economic growth (Layte, Nolan and Nolan, 2007). In particular the 'working poor' were disadvantaged by eligibility criteria that were seen to 'penalise families with children' (Keilthy, 2009:16).

In his December 2000 budget speech the then Minister for Finance Charlie McCreevy announced that from 2001 all Irish residents aged over 70 would become eligible for medical

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[36] Between the 1940s and 1950s attempts to universalise access to health services were resisted by the Roman Catholic hierarchy and Ireland's professional medical lobby.
[37] All Irish residents are entitled to public hospital services 'free of charge or at a reduced cost' (HSE, 2012) and all pregnant women are eligible for maternity care under the 'Maternity and Infant Care Scheme' (HSE, 2010)

cards, irrespective of means. This move seemed counter-intuitive given the market orientation of much health policy and McCreevy was an unlikely champion of universalism. He had previously caricatured critics of his tax reduction and individualisation measures as 'left-wing pinkos' because, allegedly, 'money belonged to the people who earned it and not the state' (Dowling, 2000). Nonetheless the new measure was rationalised as the logical conclusion of his policy agenda: '[i]n my 1999 Budget, I announced that the income limits for Medical Cards for people aged 70 years or over would be doubled over three years... That process will be completed next March, and it is now proposed to take the next step' (Dáil Éireann, 2000).

His announcement framed the extension of entitlement, which had been recommended by advocacy groups (e.g. National Council on Ageing and Older People, 1999), as proof of Government's commitment to '[a] Fairer Society'. Despite making much of its welfare credentials, the speech also reiterated policy-making's bottom-line; the 'over-riding need to keep our economy competitive and… ensure that this is reflected in our approach to how we reward ourselves' (Dáil Éireann, 2000). Since the foundation of the State in 1922 decisions about the form and substance of welfare are typically deemed ancillary to economic considerations, a tendency John Clarke (2007) describes as the 'subordination of the social'. This means that the expansion or retrenchment of welfare is rationalised first and foremost with reference to economics rather than *a priori* concepts of need or justice. Comparing the speeches of McCreevy and Lenihan we see how both the gifting and withdrawal of medical cards were framed as consistent with prudent management of the economy. Lofty references to national solidarity – McCreevy's 'fairer society with opportunity for all', Lenihan's '[t]his Budget serves no vested interest' – mask what Mary Murphy (2012:358) denotes as Ireland's 'dominant technocratic ideology'. In other words, economic governance is represented as immune from or transcendent of political dispute, while its role in sustaining social inequality is obscured.

Announcing the over-70s scheme, McCreevy reassured the public that in drafting the budget he had duly considered representations from the social partners. From the 1980s, successive governments secured agreement with business, farming and trade union sectors around a regime of low corporation taxes, industrial peace, competiveness, and flexibilisation of the public sector; all standard elements of the neo-liberal package (Meade, 2012). As Jamie Peck (2004:403) explains, however, neo-liberalism 'cannot, exist in pure form, but only manifests itself in hybrid formations'. Against more archetypical tendencies such as dismantling welfare or 'pitting the state against trade unions' (Kitchin *et al*., 2012:1307), Ireland's distinctive hybrid was underpinned by the consensus ideology of partnership and

some strategic concessions to social policy. In 1996 the elevation of the Community and Voluntary Pillar to the ranks of national partnership created a space from which its members could pursue enhanced recognition of their *social* sector, while defending and (even) extending the welfare entitlements of their constituencies. Within these arrangements, AAI and the ISCP became recognised as the voices of older people. While the comparative influence of the Community and Voluntary Pillar within social partnership is questionable, it may have contributed to a '"softer", more muted...more consensual' (Peck, 2004:393) application of neo-liberalism whereby some welfare gains were secured, among them the over-70s card.

If ministers attempted to make the medical card fit with their economic agendas, they used it to further narrow political agendas as well. Mel Cousins's (2007) work on 'budget-cycles' highlights the tendency for incumbent governments to expand social security spending at key moments in order to enhance their prospects of re-election (also Murphy, 2012). Putting it more crudely, McCreevy's move was widely recognised as an archetypical Fianna Fáil stroke: a pre-emptive effort to buy off older voters and boost the party's PR in advance of the 2002 election (Burke, 2009: Whelan, 2008). In the clientelist culture of Irish politics unsuccessful medical card applicants often lobby TDs for a review of their cases and McCreevy's gesture reflected this familiar *modus operandi,* but on a grander scale. Paddy O'Carroll (1987:44) remarks that strokes are defined by a discernible 'theatricality' – e.g. the big-stage budget speech – but also occur on the 'fringes of acceptability'. Critics accused McCreevy of wilfully misdirecting resources, favouring comparatively well-off pensioners over more needful cases (Burke, 2009), and Fintan O'Toole (2005) estimated that up to 8,000 other people who 'actually need medical cards' lost them, because the 'State couldn't afford the cost'. Although probably not intended by O'Toole, some of the wider commentary approximated the hackneyed *deserving versus undeserving* formula that undercuts populist discourses about welfare. Dr James Reilly - later to become Fine Gael's spokesperson on health and later still health minister - then chair of the IMO's GP committee, decried McCreevy's measure: 'government is handing out free medical cards to people who can afford golf club fees and at the same time neglecting those who can not afford to attend to their children's health' (www.irishhealth.com, 2000). In an under-appreciated Damascene conversion, he subsequently condemned Brian Lenihan's budget: an 'attack on the elderly under the guise of patriotism, when it was more like an act of terrorism. The principle is simple: universal health care for everyone over the age of 70' (Dáil Éireann, 2008b). Viewing this controversy over the longer term, it becomes clear that Fianna Fáil holds no monopoly on strokes.

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The 'burdens' of universalism

The principle of universalism provides for freely accessible services, payments, utilities or goods where 'an essential link is forged between the extension of social rights and citizenship' (Thompson and Hoggett, 1996:26; Danson *et al.*, 2012). It renders benefits non-negotiable: irrespective of our identities, means or geographical location we can avail of them without prejudice and without charge. Citizenship rights and welfare entitlements are, therefore, mutually affirming. For Richard Titmuss (1965:19), one of the architects of Britain's National Health Service, universalism was intrinsically linked to the 'demand for one society': 'for non-discriminatory services for all without distinction of class, income or race: for services and relations which would deepen and enlarge self-respect: for services which would manifestly encourage social integration'. Hitching universal rights to redistributive taxation and social insurance systems would, he hoped, bolster the broader public's engagement with and allegiance to the welfare state. Titmuss (1965) presciently argued that means-tested, or what he termed *discriminatory*, benefits segregate recipients, constructing them as burdensome and as a drain on the economy. If in the public mind the link between availing of and contributing to the cost of benefits is broken (Alcock, 2011; Danson *et al.*, 2012), the welfare state becomes regarded as an expensive yet residualised sphere beyond the direct experience of the majority. Furthermore, what might seem like a clerical exercise is a disciplinary practice. Means-testing is designed to weed out those judged as claiming irresponsibly, immorally or unfairly: it affects a sceptical attitude towards entitlement, thus stigmatising and exceptionalising recipients. This tendency intensifies in times of austerity when retrenchment forces the needful into ever more testing competition for scarce resources and the concept of need is itself narrowed.

Because the over-70s card was crudely politicised from its introduction, an opportunity for informed public debate on universalism's social benefits and broader scope was sacrificed. Facing down the threat of retrenchment *the Uprising* created a vital space from which older people could both defend and promote the benefits of the universal card based on personal experience. The ISCP's pre-Budget Submission (2008) called for the extension of the scheme to all those aged sixty five and over, bravely asserting the card's social worth even as hegemonic discourses pushed the inevitability of austerity. Likewise, Robin Webster of AAI, anticipating the withdrawal of automatic entitlement argued that it would undermine 'the current push towards community care and the drive to keep older people out of hospitals and nursing homes. It would not result in any reduction in illness among older people but ensure that by the time they came to doctors' surgeries that their illnesses would be more advanced'

(Lavery, 2008).

Government spokespeople adopted a somewhat anomalous position in order to defuse support for universalism: medical card retraction was essential for economic well-being but would disadvantage only a minority of better-off older people. Nonetheless, sceptical protesters were mindful that a more fundamental right was being sacrificed and Phonsie Franklin, an organiser of the Limerick march on October 25th, warned:

> This protest is solely about the over-70s, and their entitlement to the medical card. At the outset, the government wanted to save €100m, but only five per cent of people are losing their medical card. The government are only getting €5m. What the hell is that all about? It just serves to allow the government to con the people again. Next year, 20 per cent of people will lose their card, and the year after it will be 30 per cent (Limerick Leader, 2008).

There is a broader context for these developments. Neo-liberalism or what Nikolas Rose (1999) calls *advanced liberalism* has no truck with universalism, and conceptions of the social state, solidarity, and even public-ness have lost their leverage as the opposing principles of marketisation, individualisation and privatisation, somewhat ironically, have been universalised. As its core functions are redrawn, the State must ensure that all national policies, irrespective of the sphere, actively enable 'a market to exist', that they 'create and sustain the central elements of economic well-being' (*ibid.*:141). In this framework the enterprising, self-sufficient individual who exercises (responsible) choice with impunity becomes the poster-child of subjectivity. To expect governments to directly provide broad based services and welfare, or to guarantee some kind of 'incremental progress for all' (*ibid.*) is, apparently, to hark back to an outdated, sluggish and expensive model of state interventionism. In a climate of austerity, it becomes increasingly difficult to protect the principle of universalism against charges of wastefulness and inefficiency, even when research points to the contrary. As Mike Danson and colleagues (2012:8) explain, evidence demonstrates 'a clear and established causal link between equality and sustainable and sustained economic development, and universal benefits are the bedrock of all the European societies who lead the rankings which measure economic success in particular'.

Brian Lenihan's budget speech (Dáil Éireann, 2008a) affirmed Ireland's allegiance to the current hegemony - '[w]e have a low tax burden by European standards. As a country, we have made a choice to reward work and enterprise' - but in the name of political stability, governments must generate a measure of social consensus around potentially unpopular policies. Given that the budget proposed tough medicine for tough times, Lenihan (Dáil

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Éireann, 2008a) also found it necessary to frame this as 'no less than a call to patriotic action.' Again, as Nikolas Rose (1999:145) explains, patriotism, with its connotations of solidarity and collectivity, might be understood as the obverse of economic rationality which is presented as selfish and self-interested. In advanced-liberalism, however, economic rationality is characterized as the *ne plus ultra* of patriotic commitment. Drawing on the discourses of romantic nationalism – 'we can secure the gains which have been the achievement of the men and women of this country' (Dáil Éireann, 2008a) – the minister sought to revive Fianna Fáil's traditional skill at mobilising populist feeling (O'Carroll, 1987:51). His calls for patriotic action resemble the discourses of 'virtuous necessity' (Clarke and Newman, 2012) that have gained traction in the UK recently. They too solder economic rationalisations for cutbacks to a moralistic rhetoric of 'responsibility and interdependence' (*ibid.*:303). *The Uprising*, however, demonstrated protesters' explicit refusal of those discourses. Many who attended the Cork and Dublin marches wore or waved tricolours, while others wielded banners bearing more subversive reflections on patriotism:

"Hatchet Harney and Patriot Lenihan Out!"

"Our Patriotic Duty Revolution"

Defending and rationalising medical card retrenchment, Minister Lenihan also appealed to vague concepts of fairness and the presumed inefficiencies of universalism.
'Government policy is to target resources at those in greatest need. Universal entitlements irrespective of means do not target those in greatest need… in some cases there is a need to differentiate between those who have and those who have not' (Dáil Éireann, 2008a). His ideological line was embellished by party colleague Mary O'Rourke who mocked the pledges to universalism that were emanating from the opposition benches.

[T]he Labour Party represents socialism, the essence of which is that those who deserve something get it, and those who do not deserve it do not. This allows one to target scarce resources at those most in need. I understood that to be the essence of socialism. It appears this is no longer the case because the Labour Party now wishes everybody over the age of 70 years to get a medical card, regardless of means. ... Second, a quality of the Fine Gael Party that I have always admired is that of self-reliance, that one should provide for oneself where possible and should not rely on Government (Dáil Éireann, 2008c).

Such ideologically charged interventions inverted Titmuss's arguments about the relationship between equality and universalism by disassociating the principle of free access from that of redistributive taxation. They also sought to cultivate resentment. Tánaiste Mary Coughlan ridiculed efforts to retain the cards of 'well-off pensioners,… senior civil servants, High Court Judges, property tycoons, ministers of state and hospital consultants' (Kerr, 2008); a veritable rogues gallery of those deemed culpable for the excesses of the Celtic Tiger. Taoiseach Brian Cowen claimed that higher income taxes 'could put many people's jobs at risk' (O'Brien, 2008) while Mary Harney, interviewed for Marian Finucane's radio show, observed that 'we are moving away from universality… when you give something to everybody regardless then it means that somebody else needs it more' (RTÉ, 2008a).

Again there are parallels with other contexts where austerity has become normalised in the wake of the global economic crisis. Identifying the resurgence of 'anti-welfarism' internationally, Paul Hoggett *et al* (2013), recognise how it resuscitates the *deserving versus undeserving* binary, fuelling resentment of a mythologised class of feckless or parasitic benefit-consumers. Anti-welfarism undermines public faith in welfare per se, ostensibly in the name of a 'fairness agenda' (*ibid.*). Instead of being seen to (somewhat) equalise opportunity or reduce poverty, the welfare state is recast as a discriminatory mechanism that penalises so-called hard-working responsible citizens. This rhetoric, which gains credibility precisely because universalism as both a principle and a practice has been deposed, has been shamelessly exploited by the UK's Conservative/Liberal Democratic coalition in its unprecedented attack on welfare (*ibid.*). During *the Uprising*, the Irish government built its defence by targeting supposedly better-off or more prosperous pensioners. In doing so it fostered competition within a self-defining community of interest and reflected back the uglier face of the contemporary 'fairness agenda': 'one which foments rivalries and inequalities rather that building solidarities among those who "have little"' (Hoggett *et al.*, 2013:16).

This section has considered some ideological aspects of the medical card controversy. Government spokespersons retreated into populism, patriotism and resentment but they also 'dissimulated' (Thompson, 1990) as they sought to deflect important social policy issues arising from the debate. Minister Harney even tried to convince the public that *the Uprising* had nothing to do with universalism, claiming that only one person who had addressed her about the controversy had mentioned the principle (RTÉ, 2008a). However, on RTÉ (2008a) that same morning Joe Behan asserted that he was leaving Fianna Fáil because of his commitment to universal health care and two days later it was named 'Fine Gael policy' (O'Regan, 2008). Although government spokespersons repeatedly invoked the spectre of

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universalism, whether directly or by implication, Mary Harney still maintained that medical card retrenchment was not 'a matter of principle or policy' (O'Regan, 2012), and thus sought to deny its deeper political implications.

Government representatives also dissimulated around the specific conditions that rendered the over-70s medical card scheme so costly. When McCreevy announced the scheme in 2000 the cabinet had not secured a fully costed agreement with the IMO around a fee structure for GPs (Burke, 2009: Donnellan, 2008). The negotiating strength and privileged status of that professional body ensured that by the time of the scheme's introduction doctors would receive an annual capitation fee of €640 for each non-means-tested over 70 year old patient. When contrasted with the standard €160 medical-card fee, older patients became more lucrative for GP practices. It was this deal, and not universalism per se, that ultimately skewed the cost of provision towards an unanticipated €243 million annually (Burke, 2009:298).

The Uprising as 'counter-conduct'

Since 2008 the discourses and practices of austerity have been firmly implanted in the Irish policy-making field. As Kieran Allen (2012) observes, the IMF and EU Commission look upon Ireland as their 'model pupil' thanks to its willing implementation of spending cutbacks over a series of budgets. Media pundits regularly speculate on the scale of public discontent and the (un)likelihood of its fermentation into mass resistance. In these discussions *the Uprising* almost inevitably features as a yardstick of what is both possible and improbable. For the Irish Left in particular, sources of inspiration are precious, and in its immediate aftermath, the anarchist Workers Solidarity Movement (WSM) (2008:1) optimistically hailed the *Uprising* as a sign that 'politics in Ireland had changed drastically'. At the *March…* there *was* a sense that the deeper roots of Ireland's crisis were being interrogated by protesters. Many placards countered government constructions of need, economic rationality and the costliness of medical cards, by re-forging connections between mismanagement of the financial sector and the crisis in public finances.

> **"Hands off the medical cards for the over-70s**
> **Stop the bleeding of the needy**
> **To fill the pockets of the greedy"**
> **"Levy Bank Profits"**
> **"Rob the Pensioners to Bail out the Bankers**
> **Shame, Shame, Shame"**

Recent protests that have centred on 'sectional' interests or focussed on 'local mobilizations' against service withdrawal (Allen, 2012:436-7) have, in some instances, secured vital revisions or temporary reversals of policies. However, neither they nor the high-profile boycotts of new charges and taxes have been consolidated within a sustained and broad-based culture of resistance. Against the early optimism of the WSM, there is understandable disappointment in the Left that, as Laurence Cox (2012:n.p.) acknowledges, 'our movements have been rolled over so quickly'.

The Foucauldian concept of 'counter-conduct' is useful when analysing *the Uprising* and what it might reveal about the limits of resistance in Ireland. It helps us assess the extent to which protest broke with dominant discourses and political processes but equally how it played with and reflected back existing power configurations. Introducing this concept during the College De France lecture series (1977-8) Michel Foucault (2007) situates 'counter-conduct' alongside his analytical account of 'governmentality'; a concept that in turn captures how power – *to govern* – in contemporary society is oriented towards the 'conduct of conduct' (Davidson, 2011; Death, 2010). It is not only governments that govern. Whether deployed via state policy instruments, the Troika's periodic reviews, the counsel of professional 'experts', or exhortations to self by individual actors, *to govern* means to validate and call particular forms of conduct into being. Appeals that citizens 'play their part' or 'share the pain' are thus distinctive efforts at government in our era of austerity. But government is not always effective or successful, and Foucault (2009:201-2) acknowledges those varying instances of 'resistance, refusal or revolt' - collectively 'counter-conduct' - that 'struggle against the processes implemented for conducting others'. By refusing to shoulder the consequences of economic mismanagement or act like compliant patriots, older people in their various ways resisted government through their counter-conduct.

Foucault did not concede to a purist conception of resistance as external to or alienated from an opposing power. Instead power and resistance are represented as mutually constitutive, while government and counter-conduct co-exist within a similar dyad. But as Arnold Davidson (2011:27) clarifies this does not render counter-conduct 'a merely negative or reactive phenomenon'. More than a kneejerk 'NO', counter-conduct has something productive to say about government as it is actioned in our personal, cultural, social and political spheres. It is 'an active intervention… in the domain of the ethical and political practices and forces that shape us' (Davidson, 2011:32). For many participants in the *Uprising*, this was an opportunity to face down ageism, as reflected in the budget's targeting of older people and as a force within

Irish society. Underscoring Foucauldian arguments about the co-dependency of power and resistance, they sometimes appropriated ostensibly ageist language as they did so.

"Mary what's next Euthanasia?"

"OAP not RIP"

"Just Shoot Us. It would be quicker".

Similarly, if the Government denied the deeper politics of medical card retrenchment, presenting it as technocratic solution for an economy gone adrift, demonstrators accentuated the political by prophesying their future conduct as voters.

"Fianna Fáil Out"

"Fianna Fáil

You discriminate

We'll eliminate"

"No Means Test

Voters will not forget"

The concept of counter-conduct recognises that events like the *Uprising* are ethically informed and expressive of agency. Qualitative research by Jackie Fox and Sarah Quinn (2012) explores the motivations and formative experiences of seven participants in the protests. It recognises the growing prominence of extra-parliamentary activism by older people in European politics, while exploring *the Uprising's* contribution to the (re)making of interviewees' own activist identities. This is important work, not least because much of the media coverage at the time patronised the protesters. Analysing the *Irish Independent* and *Irish Star's* reporting on the protests, researchers found that although coverage was broadly critical of the Government, demonstrating 'sympathy for and solidarity with older people', the newspapers drew on ageist stereotypes to frame older people as 'victims', 'frail, infirm or vulnerable, or as unlikely 'radicals' (Fealy *et al.*, 2012:90-3). Even when coverage breaks with standard media preoccupations with supposedly dangerous, violent or semi-professional protesters, it continues to disparage *protest* as aberrant or extraordinary, particularly for older citizens.

It is tempting to bite back at smarmy media reports by over-estimating the activist credentials of older people, but if we want to appreciate what changes and what stays the same with protest, we need to be cautious. Carl Death (2010:245) admits that 'the political subjectivities performed through protests' are often 'exaggerated or momentary' but, crucially,

this does not render them 'unimportant or insignificant'. Examining the 'components' of counter-conduct we can register the context-specific forms that resistance takes in this era of neo-liberal governmentality, yet avoid giving 'a sacred status to this or that person as a dissident' (Foucault, 2009:202). The most prominent, although certainly not all, events associated with the *Uprising* were led by organisations, AAI and ISCP, with a previous involvement in social partnership. They were also members of the Older and Bolder NGO alliance that lobbies for positive-ageing social policies. Assessing *the Uprising's* political significance, Patricia Conboy (2008:11), Older and Bolder's project director, wrote: '[w]e have also seen what happens when major policy change is introduced without effective consultation and communication with the people most affected by that change. In this case it was older people and their message has been clear "nothing about us without us"'.

We cannot know if this statement encapsulates the hopes or aspirations of all who participated in activism over that eventful week. Clearly, for some lead organisations at least, participation in protest was not indicative of a rejection of partnership with the State; instead this was an opportunity to embed it further. In Ireland's post-corporatist climate, 'binary conflict' (Death, 2010: 247) between authentic outsiders and insiders is somewhat difficult to map. Likewise, *the Uprising* did not constitute a rupture with the clientelist norms of representative democracy in Ireland. Protests were centred on the Dáil or constituency offices; opposition politicians were conspicuously present at the *March…*; some protesters carried banners with Fine Gael, Labour and Socialist Party logos; while others hailed Joe Behan's decision to exit Fianna Fáil. Simultaneously reflecting and reproducing the personality fixated character of Irish politics, placards singled out individual ministers;

"Shame on you Brian for even tryin"

"2 Brians No Brain"

"Harney you're fired"

"Hard hearted Harney"

"Who's the real virus in Health?"

Although reproachful of ministers perceived as betraying the interests of older people, conversely those placards affirmed and thus reinforced their status as authoritative decision makers. This reminds us that counter-conducts are 'closely linked to the regimes of power' (Death, 2010:240) they oppose and in that they are reflective of the hybridised, contradictory and governmentalized times in which we live. The *Uprising* was an expression of countervailing power by protesters who sought to conduct the conduct of their elected

representatives. They adroitly adopted tactics and techniques that won the attention of the wider public, mass media and political elites. But power relationships and politics in Ireland had *not* changed drastically; instead clientelist traditions were refracted through protest tactics, and afterwards ministers still behaved as if social policy is an after-thought to economic and electoral considerations.

Conclusion

The *Uprising* showed that significant numbers of older people were unwilling to walk meekly into austerity's embrace as they demonstrated their collective capacity to mobilise, picket, protest and shape public debates. Even though neo-liberalism has been compromised by the global economic crisis, policy makers in Ireland and elsewhere seem unwilling to abandon its orthodoxies. The budget of October 2008, and those that followed, privilege a reified model of economic stability: one that renders other considerations – health, welfare, justice or culture – secondary and subordinate. There is nothing particularly new about this and the evolution of social policy since Independence has been variously constrained and enabled by economic rationalisations. Neo-liberalism, however, brings its own distinctive threats for those who are committed to the survival and expansion of the welfare state along democratic and egalitarian lines. As Jacques Donzelot (2008:12) observes 'social policy is no longer a means for countering the economic, but a means for sustaining the logic of competition'. New discourses of fairness meet a resurgent anti-welfarism, as policy makers urge citizens to follow 'choice' and 'opportunity' into the market-place. Meanwhile those judged needful, deserving or entitled to benefits are represented as a necessarily diminishing sub-group constituted by society's most marginal citizens. Recognising that the health needs of older people are unlikely to be prioritised in this climate, many protesters at *the March…* carried mocked-up posters for the Coen Brothers' film, *No Country for Old Men*. If Irish discourses about the economy affect a common-sense or technocratic character, discourses about welfare reek with judgement. Applicants must prove the legitimacy of their need as thresholds go higher; patriotism requires that we endorse welfare retrenchment and find a new competitive edge.

As counter-conduct *the Uprising* publicly affirmed the legitimacy of universal provision for older people, if not for all. Fine Gael grafted the concept onto its health policy and the Irish Times initiated a brief debate on its ethics and effectiveness (Clancy and McDowell, 2008; Keenan, 2008). Neo-liberalism dismisses universalism as a relic of the past and there is a pleasing symmetry in the fact that those who themselves struggle against ageist labels emerged as its champions. Demonstrating the crucial distinction between social

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solidarity and social consensus, protesters spoke eloquently of the difference the medical card made to their lives, countered the ethics of the bank bail-out and warned politicians that as voters they would remember. However, through a series of ideological dissimulations and revised eligibility criteria, the Government successfully withdrew automatic entitlement. Fine Gael and Labour condemned the proposal in 2008, but in 2014 oversee its administration and they still have not clarified the structure of their promised universal model of GP care.

The Uprising reveals that counter-conduct works with and within constraints. Protesters did not claim or hold out for new political horizons; instead they projected the clientelist bargain on to the national stage. They won concessions with regard to eligibility thresholds and raised the spectre of a sensitive and mobile older people's vote. Undoubtedly, these are victories but after *the Uprising* the ways we think and talk about social policy, whether practising government or resistance, remain largely unchanged. Finally, the IMF (2011) and EU (European Commission, 2012) continue to express concerns regarding the cost of universal benefits, particularly those linked to age, so that every year the Budget is preceded by tedious media speculation about the fate of child benefit or free travel for older people. Let's hope that the events of *the Older People's Uprising* continue to haunt the collective memory of policy makers, warning them against acceding to IMF and EU demands on the expansion of means-testing across the policy field. If so, this would be another unanticipated but still vital success for *the Uprising*: not on the scale that we on the Left envisage or need, but an important step towards salvaging principles of solidarity in these deeply demoralising times.

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The Re-signification of State-Funded Community Development in Ireland;[38] A problem of austerity and neoliberal government
Rosie R. Meade

Abstract

This article analyses the changing rationalities and techniques through which the Irish state seeks to govern community development; specifically, how the displacement of its flagship Community Development Programme by the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme has been justified and operationalised. Adopting a governmentality perspective, it explains how community development came to be constructed as an anti-poverty strategy and why it should also be understood as a 'technology of government'. This article argues that the changing governmentalities shaping Irish community development are reflected in a re-problematisation and re-signification of community development's purposes, rationalities and sources of legitimacy. Under the cover of austerity's manufactured public spending crisis and new forms of expertise, preoccupations with effectiveness, efficiency and international best practice have intensified, thus demonstrating on-going incursions by neoliberal ideas and practices in Irish Social Policy.

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[38] Here 'Ireland' refers to the Republic of Ireland only.

The Re-signification of State-Funded Community Development in Ireland; A problem of austerity and neoliberal government

Rosie R. Meade

Introduction

Put simply community development is 'a process through which … people collectively attempt to influence their life chances' (Meade, Shaw and Banks, 2016: 4). Due, however, to the normative yet promiscuous deployment of the term in diverse contexts, community development simultaneously refers to a professional practice and an activist commitment; it is promoted *by* the state, in partnership *with* the state, and *against* the state; communities are alternatively constructed as potentially active subjects, as deficient or competent actors; and there are on-going tensions about the relative valuing of its processes and the developmental or democratic outcomes it is expected to generate (Ife, 2013; Shaw, 2011). Community workers' practice is often constructed as value driven, informed by social justice principles, and as demonstrating a concern with the nurturance of collective action, participation, and citizen empowerment (Ife, 2013; Shaw, 2011). But in the everyday contexts of practice globally, values are mediated through the interests and power-plays of invested actors that include local and national governments, social movements and NGOs, private and state funders, professionals and diverse community 'representatives' (Meade, Shaw and Banks, 2016).

Commencing with a brief discussion of how community development came to be identified and deployed as an anti-poverty strategy internationally and in Ireland, this paper characterises community development as a 'technology of government', where my understanding of 'government' is shaped by governmentality perspectives that have emerged to interpret and extend theoretical insights from Michel Foucault's Collège de France lectures. Although Foucault (2009: 109) registered a strong note of ambivalence about the centrality of the state to contemporary governmental practices – 'maybe the state is only a composite reality and a mythicized abstraction whose importance is much less than we think' – this article privileges the state as a policy actor. My analysis focuses on the changing rationalities and reforms through which the Irish state seeks to govern community development; specifically, how the eventual displacement of its flagship Community Development Programme by the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme has been justified and operationalised. I do not claim that the state conclusively determines or controls all community development

practice in Ireland, but that Governments now demonstrate a more aggressive concern with defining, directing and aligning purposes and outcomes in the community programmes they fund.

Peck (2010: 106) points to 'neoliberalism's shape-shape shifting capacities', whereby it mutates to accommodate diverse and ostensibly contradictory practices, ranging from 'budget cuts to regulation-by-audit, from welfare retrenchment to active social policy', while still constituting 'a deeply consolidated *and* a crisis-driven form of market rule'. From 2008 Ireland's recession was called upon to legitimise the enactment of austerity measures across the social policy and welfare systems resulting in significant retrenchment in resources for community and voluntary sector activities (Harvey, 2012). Aside from impacts such as funding cuts, staff reductions and the closure of services, austerity rationalised and effected profound changes in the structures, knowledge-base and norms of accountability governing the state's community programmes (Crowley, 2013; McGrath, 2016; Meade, 2012; Power, 2014). Community development's purposes were re-signified accordingly. As Newman (2014: 142) explains, 're-signification is a form of cultural practice' whereby 'chains of signifiers are disrupted and reconnected in order for a concept to take on a new meaning' and it often coincides with 'projects of de-politicization and welfare reform'. This paper contends that these re-significations and reforms reflect the on-going encroachments of neoliberalism, as both 'ideational-ideological project' (Peck, 2010: 106) and assemblage of practices, within Irish community development policy.

Community development as anti-poverty strategy

In Ireland really existing community development has been shaped from 'below', by social movements and voluntary action, from 'above' by policy-making, and from 'outside' by changing concepts of and ideas about the social role of community (Meade, 2012). For the post-independence state, which in 1922 was wrestling with the after effects of anti-imperialist and civil wars, economic crisis was a constant threat, and it responded with a mix of fiscal, social and cultural conservatism (Garrett, 2012). Social policy and welfare provision evolved slowly and its often punitive character reflected the ideological preoccupations, moral fetishes, and class interests of the Catholic hierarchy and dominant political and economic groups (Ferriter, 2005: Garrett, 2012). In the absence of an active state presence, various forms of voluntary organisation, typically centred on parishes or geographical communities, stepped in to provide elements of a social or developmental infrastructure. The Catholic social movement Muintir na Tíre (Devereux, 1993) and the Credit Unions were early exponents of the kinds of

self-help/mutual aid discourses that would become synonymous with community development. Alternatively, oppositional groups also emerged in rural and urban settings, during the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, to protest the state's failure to provide basic services, guarantee economic opportunities and protect social, cultural and civil rights; in such cases 'community' was a signifier of critique and demands for deeper democratic and structural reform (Meade, 2012). The creation of an identifiable community development sector during the 1980s and 1990s was also influenced by the presence in Dublin and the larger cities of 'women's educational projects in low income communities' (Hayes, 1990: 6). Espousing a participatory ethos and combining elements of critical community education and personal development, projects affirmed the central role of women as members, leaders, activists and as paid workers within this emerging practice field.

Internationally, an early form of state-sponsored community development is recorded by Mayo (2011) as occurring between the two world wars. In the face of burgeoning anti-imperialism in Africa and Asia, local programmes were instituted by the British Colonial Office to ensure continuity in economic and social relations in the pre- and post-independence periods, and to impede any 'serious dislocation of the vested interests of the status quo' (Mayo, 2011: 76). Similar rationalities or a 'will to civilise' have informed many subsequent deployments of community development. Since the 1970s and in its contemporary manifestations, community development is often constituted through state-led interventions that seek to engage and/or activate 'disadvantaged' communities. Among the harbingers of this policy approach was the US War on Poverty of the 1960s. Its Community Action Programme promised 'to effect a permanent increase in the capacity of individuals, groups and communities afflicted by poverty to deal effectively with their own problems so that they need no further assistance' (Office of Economic Opportunity, 1965, in Cruikshank, 1999: 73) while the British Community Development Projects were launched from 1968 as part of an Urban Programme to respond to an alleged 'deadly quagmire of need and apathy' (Callaghan, 1968: n.p.). Although distinct in their scale, organisation, operations and their subsequent association with resistance and critique, from a policy maker's perspective both programmes were expected to activate community participation in order to target the cycles of disadvantage and personal disempowerment to which poor communities were presumed to be susceptible (Cruikshank, 1999; Loney, 1980).

Ireland 'rediscovered' the problem of poverty in 1971 and following its accession to the European Economic Community (1973) the state became a partner in the roll-out of the first European Anti-Poverty programme. It centred on 'pilot schemes and studies' designed to 'test

and develop new methods' that would be implemented 'as far as possible with the participation of those concerned' (European Commission, 1975: 1). Launched in 1975 the programme included a community action stream that was overseen by a National Committee and involved a mix of urban and rural projects (Meade, 2012; National Committee, 1981). The novelty of this anti-poverty strategy, with its emphasis on community development, was underscored in an address to the Dáil (Parliament) by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Social Welfare (1975: n.p.).

> They offer the hope of early and important contributions to policy on service delivery and uptake; on community development and local community action; on social provision through coordinated effort and on the introduction of new policies. These projects will involve real positive action and will be characterised by a quite radical approach to the identification and tackling of deprivation. Participation will be stressed at every stage.

A second European Programme (1985–89) again affirmed the productive role of community development in the social policy armoury. By 1986 the Combat Poverty Agency (CPA) was established on a statutory basis and charged with 'assisting, encouraging and the giving of information on, community development as a means of overcoming poverty' (Government of Ireland, 1986: n.p.). A state body was now formally tasked with rationalising *and* promoting community development.

The community action/participation/development elements of the various anti-poverty programmes 'enrolled' poor communities as both subjects *and* objects of social policy delivery (Clarke, 2010: 639), as people who could be incentivised to change *and* act. There are, however inherent conflicts in reconciling these competing identities, biddable object/active subject, as the histories of the EEC, UK and US programmes revealed. As programmes were operationalised, issues of dispute emerged between communities and policy makers that still vex community development processes: the depth and scope of popular participation; appropriate chains of accountability and control; the respective roles and authority of the local and national state; constructions of poverty and its causes; and the relative weighting afforded to personal and structural change (Cruikshank, 1999; National Committee, 1981; Loney, 1980). These histories also illustrate how such programmes became distinguishable as 'technologies of government', shaped by distinct if not always consistent rationalities and assumptions about who and where poor people are and how to activate them.

Community development is 'government'

Representing community development as a 'technology of government' means recognising it is a means by which communities are problematised, targeted and mobilised in the name of outcomes such as empowerment, social inclusion or labour market participation (Clarke, 2010; Cruikshank, 1999; Rose, 2000). Foucault understood government as the 'conduct of conduct' (Davidson, 2011), and it incorporates the full range of programmes, projects and actions that seek to rationalise and direct behaviour in particular ways (Foucault, 2009). As Rose (2000: 323-4) explains, the state is not the sole author of government in contemporary society and a range of actors, 'experts', interest or advocacy groups, professional and private bodies strive to conduct the behaviour and shape the identities of selves, communities and societies. These are *positive* expressions of power, not in a normative sense but because they are socially *productive*; they are 'broadly consistent with particular objectives such as order, civility, health or enterprise' (Rose, 2000: 323).

Governmentality perspectives are concerned with the rationalities, govern*mentalities,* inspiring interventions, but they also analyse the techniques and technologies through which rationalities become practical or practicable (McGregor et al., 2013). Areas of interest range from the intimate to the macro, from how we are exhorted to trim our waistlines to the distinctive characteristics of austerity in individual welfare states. Given neoliberalism's dominance within international political economy, governmentality studies interpret how states 'devolve', transfer or relinquish particular responsibilities, while governing 'at a distance' (Rose *et al*., 2009: 9). *Neoliberal* governmentalities typically promote personal responsibility, entrepreneurialism, competitiveness, economic efficiencies and accountability among the individuals, institutions and communities targeted (Larner, 2000). Clarke (2010: 641) points to the clouding of 'conventional distinctions between realms and roles', between state and civil society or community and Government, as diverse actors become subjects/objects or 'co-producers of welfare, care, community and the "social fabric"'. However, it should be emphasised that 'government at a distance' is not a new or entirely neoliberal phenomenon in Ireland and, as Garret (2012: 271) observes, there are connections 'between the historical and the contemporary'. A range of social policy functions was abdicated by the post-Independence state to the religious orders of the Roman Catholic Church, which took a particularly active role in the regulation of families and children, in the reform of so-called sinners, and in the management of various institutions of confinement where acutely authoritarian forms of government were enforced (Garrett, 2012).

Contemporary civil society organisations are 'governmentalized' in that they self-identify and are responsibilised as sites and solutions to the problems of society (Pyykkönen,

2015: 10) while state agencies or central Government are themselves 'products' of the complex interplay of governmental rationalities and practices. Despite the asymmetries of power involved, civil society actors repeatedly make demands of the state, while simultaneously claiming territories of government and presenting as experts on particular societal problems (McGregor *et al*., 2013; Pyykkönen, 2015). A governmentality perspective on community development thus invites us to view the ostensibly separate 'community' and 'state' sectors as proximate, overlapping and in certain instances mutually constitutive. The preceding discussion of the anti-poverty programmes highlights the state's role in engineering community projects. Alternately, local activists may have viewed programmes as opportunities for lobbying the state, for politicising their wider communities, and for 'conducting conduct' – their own, their neighbours or that of state officials - in the name of democracy, equality or social change. Again, a closer reading of the poverty programmes' respective histories might reveal how the various actors involved navigated and shaped resulting relationships: how community development emerged from and reflected dynamics of antagonism, co-operation, consensus, distrust, or power struggle.

Governmentalities are not static and they are repeatedly revised in the name of new problematisations and priorities (Rose *et al*., 2009: 22). Therefore, the following sections analyse how Governments, from 2009-2016, reconditioned their support for Ireland's land-mark Community Development Programme[39]. Focusing on a period of 'policy change' allows us to identify mentalities and technologies of government otherwise 'obscured from view by their very commonality', 'how they became contested' and re-signified (McGregor *et al*., 2013: 1237). Governmentalities are expressed through discursive shifts and problematisations, and the 'regimes of truth' (Foucault, 1994: 238) both arising from and legitimising recent Programme transformations are explored. These include the advisors utilised, the knowledge drawn upon and the evidence now expected from Programme implementers. As will be shown, government is also constituted by institutional changes, funding efficiencies and technical reforms (McGregor *et al.*, 2013; Rose *et al.*, 2009). These have tangible effects for how community development is done within state programmes, as new technologies for monitoring, reporting and accounting are deployed for use by community workers (McGrath, 2016).

From Community Development Programme to Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme

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[39] Programme with a capital P refers to the Community Development Programme.

In a 1988 publication, the CPA lobbied for a community development focused anti-poverty programme that would provide 'integrated' and 'secure' funding, while allowing projects to access resources on an 'independent' basis (1988: S3.2). It cited the 'urgent need to *involve* marginalised communities in collective, *flexible* and creative social programmes which ensure that they become *partners in and not the victims* of development' (1988: S1.3, emphasis added). These discourses, with their accent on partnership, which itself became a dominant theme in Irish policy making and government during the 1990s, were replicated in Social Welfare Minister, Michael Woods' own discursive construction of the rationalities informing the Community Development Fund (CDF) that he launched in 1990. Continuing the approach adopted in the EEC pilot-schemes, the CDF initially provided grants for the establishment of fifteen community resource centres/projects (CDPs) and the employment of project co-ordinators in targeted areas of disadvantage. Minister Woods (1991: n.p.) envisaged that local projects would mobilise the 'involvement of' of poor communities 'in developing approaches to tackle the problems they face' while 'creating successful partnerships between the voluntary and statutory agencies in the areas concerned'.

As it was extended to other communities, the CDF was subsequently rebranded the Community Development Programme and later the Community Development Support Programme. From 1990–2002, and despite changes in Government, official policy towards the Programme was unequivocally expansionary and evangelical. The productive role of community development in the government of poverty and in inducing desired behaviours from poor people was accepted as a self-evident truth. As former minister Dermot Ahern (1999: n.p) explained:

> Support for community development continues to be an integral part of the Government's overall social and economic development strategy. Community Development is the means by which the capacity of disadvantaged local communities and communities of interest to participate in mainstream development initiatives is increased.

Independent research consultancy Nexus (2002: 63) was in 1999 charged with evaluating the Programme, to 'present the rationale for funding' it within 'an overall social development and anti-poverty strategy', to 'measure and document' impacts, and to suggest modifications to 'structure, policy or funding' consistent with cost-efficiency and 'effectiveness' (NEXUS, 2002: 5). The evaluation report recommended the establishment of a Strategic Development Group representing the diversity of programme partners along with the adoption of new techniques and systems for documenting the work of constituent projects. This would enable the gathering of information about the particularities of local project environments, their

resources, everyday work priorities, methods and outcomes (NEXUS, 2002: 63). Nonetheless, and as Power (2014: 92) highlights, the evaluation was largely 'positive' in tone. Nexus (2002: 63) declared itself satisfied that CDPs had 'very significantly' enhanced the 'circumstances' and 'opportunities' available in 'some of the most disadvantaged communities in the country'.

In 2001 the Programme was extended to incorporate locally-based Family Resource Centres (FRCs) but the following year that decision was reversed and the FRCs became attached to a new Family Support Agency. Such moves were an early indicator of Government ambivalence about the need to streamline its 'community' initiatives. Additionally, and confusingly, over the course of the Programme's history, the title and policy focus of the Government department to which it was affiliated was liable to change; Department of Social Welfare, Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs, the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, and finally the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government. Coinciding with the transfer of the Programme to the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, Minister Éamon Ó'Cuiv (2003: n.p.) in 2003 initiated a 'review' of the 'schemes' being funded by the department in order to ensure 'optimal coherence'. This action revealed that the internal diversity of programmes was now being problematised and it instituted a new layer of disciplinary oversight and control, whereby individual project priorities would require approval from 'above'. Local projects were thenceforward expected to submit work-plans to local councils' City/County Development Boards for endorsement, evidence that Government now sought 'a more co-ordinated engagement by the State with communities' (Ó'Cuiv, 2003: n.p.; also, Meade 2012; Power, 2014). However, the Programme did not change substantively until the end of the decade when concerns about 'coherence' and effectiveness amplified, and the enactment of austerity, local government reforms and the delivery of evidence-based efficiencies rationalised more radical revisions to its structures and goals.

By 2009, 185 community development projects along with a range of other Local Development Social Inclusion (LDSIP) and LEADER companies were funded through parallel but distinct programmes in the Department of Community Rural and Gaeltacht affairs. There were notable differences in the organisational culture and degree of community participation in decision-making elicited through the schemes: CDPs were directly managed by committees of local volunteers while LDSIP Companies serviced a wider geography and their management boards were constituted by partnerships of business, trade union, state and community sector

representatives. Against a backdrop of austerity and a systems-wide review of public expenditure, the previously 'independent' CDPs were aligned (or merged) with LDSIP companies and brought under their management[40]. Rationalising the urgency of reform, Minster for State, John Curran claimed in 2009 (n.p.) that alignment would 'minimise structures and provide a single integrated delivery structure for all areas', 'enhance monitoring and evaluation' and would mirror 'international best practice'. His reference to best practice was not simply rhetorical, as the Government had commissioned the recently established 'think and do tank' (CES, 2016: n.p.), the Centre for Effective Services (CES), to provide a systematic literature review, drawn from the 'international evidence base', on 'what works' in community development (Bamber *et al*., 2010: 1-2). Shifting governmentalities are reflected in the discrediting of accepted rationalities, discourses and practices, and so it was in this era of reform. Deviating from previous advice to Government, the CES maintained that programmes that 'vary substantially at local level also become very challenging (and sometimes impossible) to evaluate using orthodox scientific methods. This in turn renders them non-accountable for outcomes and cost effectiveness eroding political and public buy in' (Bamber *et al*., 2010: 2-3). In contrast, the CPA (1988: section 3.2) had advocated 'more autonomy and control' for local projects while Nexus (2002: 6) allowed that 'considerable differences' are to be expected in their operations and methods. Against a view of community development as necessarily led by community aspirations and priorities, the CES (Bamber *et al*., 2010: 110) asserted that 'effectiveness in an individual programme is a function of coherence across the whole range of actions related to that programme'. The CES was more in step with the neoliberal rationalities then guiding public sector reform and its 'evidence-based' pronouncements about coherence provided Government with additional ballast for policy changes that were by that point probably already inevitable.

Section 36 of the *Local Government Reform Act* (Government of Ireland, 2014: n.p.) established Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs) in Ireland's 31 local authority/council areas to deliver a more 'coherent and integrated approach to local and community development'. Working within the local-government system and constituted as public-private partnerships, LCDCs are responsible for co-ordinating and overseeing the delivery of all publicly funded community development. Alongside the 'intermediary agency' Pobal, they are also charged with managing and monitoring local delivery of the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP), the final stage in the

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[40] See Power (2014) for a detailing and critique of these reforms.

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displacement/replacement of the Community Development Programme. SICAP was launched from April 2015 to December 2017 in the wake of a tendering process to find implementers for its key elements or 'lots' as they are described (POBAL, 2016).

Regarding the totality of changes outlined above, we see that the physical anchoring of community resource centres in specific localities has finally given way to SICAP's 'lots' of *services* or *activities* that are contracted via competitive tendering processes (Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, 2014). The practice of community management of projects, once normalised, has ended and the scope for community participation in decision-making curtailed accordingly. Quasi-democratic rationalities have been ceded to economic ones. Although tendering for SICAP contracts has so far favoured the non-profit Local and Community Development Programme companies established after 2010, community activists fear that tendering represents a definitive step towards 'privatisation of the community sector' (Holland: 2015, n.p.). This has been denied by Government but, as the following section demonstrates, the governmentalities rationalising community development policy are vulnerable to on-going incursions by the practices and 'vocabularies of neoliberal efficiency' (McGregor *et al.*, 2013: 1241).

Austerity and community development's problem with effectiveness

Peck (2010: 106) contends that when neoliberalism fails, 'it tends to fail forwards' and so it was in Ireland in 2008. Even though the economic crisis had been precipitated by successive Governments' unwillingness to regulate speculative housing and financial markets, the failures of neoliberal policies ultimately rationalised and effected new expressions of neoliberalism (Fraser *et al.* 2013; Mercille, 2014). The state's political/economic response centred on a bailout of Ireland's banking/financial system through a project 'of class restoration' that responsibilised 'ordinary workers and citizens' for the 'bank debts [of] financial and property elites' (Fraser *et al.* 2013: 50). O'Flynn *et al.* (2014: 925) document how the combined forces of Government and mainstream media democratised 'blame' for the crisis to the entire population, while simultaneously scapegoating 'public sector workers' and welfare recipients - especially unemployed people, single parents, and alleged welfare-cheats - as leeching off the economy. From 2008 a succession of aggressively punitive budgets curtailed welfare payments, recalibrated or withdrew allowances and introduced new taxes and charges, while the disciplinary logics of austerity occasioned the imposition of new flexibilities, forms of performance management, and employment embargoes within the public service (Allen, 2012;

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Fraser *et al*. 2013; Garrett, 2012: Mercille, 2014)[41]. As Barry (2014: 8-9) highlights, austerity's consequences were also gendered, restricting fields of employment, such as in the public sector, and forms of welfare, including payments for carers, child benefit and other social supports, that are particularly important for women. In winter 2010 the Irish state acceded to the distinctly neoliberal conditionalities associated with a bailout from the Troika of the EU, European Central Bank and International Monetary Fund. Government's dogged resolve in effecting reforms, along with the public's apparent resignation in the face of wide ranging fiscal 'adjustments', incited widespread and troubling caricatures of Ireland 'as best pupil in the austerity class' (Allen, 2012: 436).

Austerity had devastating implications for the funding, viability and scope of the Irish community sector. Harvey's (2012: 13) detailed analysis of public spending retrenchment reveals that between 2008 and 2012 community and voluntary organisations were disproportionately impacted: anti-drugs initiatives, family support projects and the Local Community Development Programme lost about 29%, 17% and 35% of funding respectively. National bodies charged with promoting equality, anti-racism, and poverty proofing in public policy were in some cases amalgamated and in others disbanded (Baker *et al*, 2015). Among those closed was the CPA, which had advised Government on and consistently promoted state investment in community development. Consequences for local and voluntary organisations included the loss of core services, the erosion of working conditions (Harvey, 2012) and the normalisation of what Crowley (2013: 151) calls a 'survival agenda'.

In order to provide a 'rational basis' for austerity's roll-out the Government established a *Special Group* to identify state departments, programmes and funding streams that could be reined in or abandoned. Demonstrably neoliberal in its construction of reform, the Group also saw its remit as interrogating 'why public service provision might be warranted, rather than allowing the private sector to provide the service' (McCarthy, 2009: vi). The two-volume *Report of Special Group on Public Service Numbers and Expenditure Programmes* (McCarthy, 2009: 4) proposed cuts of an estimated €5.3 billion within a year and identified staffing reductions of 17,300(c.). It recommended closure of the Department of Community Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, home of the Community Development Programme, with either the re-allocation of its functions to other departments or their cessation. Of particular concern was 'the efficiency of a structure which consists of a large number of very small organisations' (McCarthy, 2009: 17), what might alternatively be understood as *the* defining characteristic of

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[41] In 2010 welfare cuts approximated €760 million and in 2011 €873 million (Mercille, 2014: 286).

community development groups. Its recommendations included the centralisation of all funding for community projects, mergers and rationalisations of local organisations, and an expanded role for local government in directing service delivery.

While the McCarthy report resurrected themes that had been anticipated in Ó'Cuiv's 2003 review of the Community Development Programme, the earlier review did not incite the scale of transformation that occurred from 2009-2016. Austerity provided motive and opportunity for more radical reforms. The 2009 report problematised business as normal in Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs as well as the mentalities informing community development policy to date and, in this latter regard, the CES functioned as its echo-chamber. From a Foucauldian perspective, problematisations 'emerge when existing forms of government come under scrutiny' 'as insufficient or inadequate', when 'foundational assumptions' begin to be regarded as unstable (Braun *et al*. 2010: 512). In the McCarthy report (2009: 18; see also McGrath, 2016) reform was not merely a function of spending reductions, although they were prioritised, it also commanded greater attentiveness to the 'effectiveness' of 'delivery mechanism[s]' and the detailing of 'benefits for consumers and taxpayers': neoliberal efficiencies must be achieved and, crucially, they must be shown to be achieved.[42]

The re-signification of the economic crisis as a public-spending crisis, and the consequent rendering of state spending as conditional on evidence, meant that community development was directed to generate an 'impact that is easier to measure and evaluate' (2009: 18). What 'works' would no longer be left to the vagaries of deliberations between community workers and communities. Accordingly, the recent *Our Communities; A Framework Policy for Local and Community Development in Ireland* (Department of Environment Community and Local Government, 2015), privileging an economic bottom-line, confirms that effectiveness in community development will be determined and demanded by Government into the future:

> There is an ongoing imperative to focus on economy, efficiency and effectiveness. It is intended that this Framework Policy will provide a structure to help manage expectations and to set realistic targets in line with available resources (DECLG, 2015: 11).

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[42] McCarthy diverged from Nexus (2002: 6-7) which had conceded that 'community development does not lend itself easily to measurement in quantitative terms'; its distinctive 'ethos' and commitment to 'process' rendering the recording of impacts problematic.

Re-signifying community development

Governmental practices create 'field[s] of possibilities' where conduct 'has a trajectory, a set of performed limits' (Thompson, 2003: 121). In 1995 a briefing document on the Community Development Programme called *Working Together Against Poverty* was published with a foreword from the Democratic Left, Minister for Social Welfare, Proinsias De Rossa. It outlined official and foundational rationales underpinning the programme and its expected achievements. They included:

> 'encouraging greater participation in public decision-making which leads to more effective and better targeted policies and programmes at local, regional and national level'
>
> 'influencing change in structures, policies and processes which contribute to poverty and exclusion'
>
> 'developing a collective response to community needs'
>
> 'ensuring equality of opportunity and challenging discrimination and prejudice'
>
> 'seeking an equitable distribution of power and resources in order to ensure a fairer society'
>
> 'enhancing the skills and self-confidence of people experiencing poverty and social exclusion'
>
> 'developing alternative methods and models of working which seek to directly involve and empower groups and individuals within the community' (Department of Social Welfare, 1995: 3).

This iteration of community development identified *who* and *what* local projects could legitimately act upon, and its discourses reflected the influence of the CPA (1988). It also included standard allusions to empowerment, participation, and up-skilling communities, while evoking a normative commitment to social justice and reform. Notably, the intended subjects/objects of 'change' included 'structures, policies and processes', which were implicated in the persistence of poverty and inequality. Community development was thus signified as an on-going, open-ended cycle of change that elicits new forms of conduct and understandings in citizens *and* potentially state institutions. This is not to pretend that the Programme licensed radical structural critique or activism; the document's title, *Working Together…,* itself reinforced the consensus logic of partnership then dominating Irish governance (Meade, 2012; Crowley, 2013). But it did extend the field of responsibilisation beyond poor communities and individuals.

The unveiling of SICAP reflects notable discursive shifts within Government policy, although the semantic association between community development and anti-poverty policy is maintained. While SICAP's 'vision is to improve the life chances and opportunities of those who are marginalised in society, living in poverty or in unemployment through community development approaches' (Pobal, 2016: 5), the word *activation* has prominence in the programme title. As Clarke (2005) argues, activation is not synonymous with work activation alone; citizens today are activated to engage in a plethora of productive activities and like all technologies of government, community development inevitably implies some sort of activation agenda. However, SICAP's Programme Goal 3 renders the correspondence of activation and employability explicit:

> To engage with marginalised target groups/individuals and residents of disadvantaged communities who are unemployed but who do not fall within mainstream employment service provision, or who are referred to SICAP, to move them closer to the labour market and improve work readiness, and support them in accessing employment and self-employment and creating social enterprise opportunities. (Pobal, 2016: 5)

This goal reflects a more widespread punitive turn in welfare reform and social protection during Ireland's period of austerity. Fraser *et al.* (2013: 45-46) record how practices such as the 'profiling' and 'monitoring' of job-seekers, and the 'application of sanction mechanisms' to the non-compliant, were instituted as labour market reforms at this time of high unemployment. They also note that community organisations were recruited to host 'workfare' type employment placements, where welfare allowances were a substitute for real wages. Indeed, when compared with the 1995 publication, all three of SICAP's Programme goals seem more restrictive in their designation of community development's actors, actions and fields of possibility. Goals one and two are:

> To support and resource disadvantaged communities and marginalised target groups to engage with relevant local and national stakeholders in identifying and addressing social exclusion and equality issues;
>
> To support individuals and marginalised target groups experiencing educational disadvantage so they can participate fully, engage with and progress through life-long learning opportunities through the use of community development approaches. (Pobal, 2016: 5)

'The field of visibility' of a given governmental regime refers to the means by which it becomes possible to 'picture who and what is to be governed' and the arrangements and outcomes towards which they are to be conducted (Dean, 2010: 41). SICAP's tighter

programme goals, instruct implementers/community workers to activate disadvantaged individuals and communities towards economically and socially productive forms of conduct; engagement with other stakeholders, education and employment. Community development is signified as more technocratic, less overtly political: contrast SICAP's reference to 'equality issues' with allusions to 'discrimination and prejudice' or 'equitable distribution of power' in the earlier Programme. Policy makers and state structures are now rendered invisible as *objects* of government: it is the conduct of poor, unemployed or educationally disadvantaged citizens that must be modified in the long-run.

Community development's meanings have never been fixed and it has long been deployed for divergent political and social purposes (Shaw, 2011). Evidently, the rolling out of SICAP announces another stage in the re-signification of 'official' community development in Ireland. In line with the neoliberal logics of austerity, it is being deployed towards a results-driven work-activation agenda, and its normative commitments have been stripped back so that structural critique, democratisation, community participation and the re-responsibilisation of the state now lie beyond its purview.

'Knowing' community development

The complicated journey from Community Development Programme to SICAP has begotten operational changes in how contracts are awarded and how work performance is directed, monitored and 'known'. Minister Alan Kelly (2014: n.p.) rationalised competitive tendering for SICAP's local-level implementers in typically technocratic terms: it was instituted 'in accordance with the Public Spending Code, best practice internationally, legal advice and … the optimum delivery of the services'. But tendering processes are not only technocratic, they too circumscribe fields of possibility. Competitors must demonstrate their capacity to deliver outcomes efficiently: processes underscore the provisionality of public-subsidy. In line with neoliberal governmentalities, 'prudent', 'calculating' and 'responsible' conduct is expected and elicited (Rose, 2000: 324). Additionally, recent reforms have intensified the use of technical systems for documenting, monitoring and reviewing the work being undertaken at local-level. SICAP implementers must adhere to and work with; illustrative guidelines on 'programme', 'headline' and 'key performance indicators'; a categorisation of beneficiaries and target groups; an ICT based Integrated Reporting and Information System (IRIS) for recording outcomes; and 'performance monitoring', with on-going, mid-year and end of year returns, and incorporating nine distinct stages of information generation (Pobal, 2016: 44-52). Analysing their deployment within the preceding Local and Community Development

Programme, McGrath (2016: 185) highlights how such 'information systems' have 'become key to gaining standardized knowledge from individual projects and organizations'. They specify the means, methods and moments through which community workers make their achievements knowable to funders and Programme administrators, Pobal. Those actions also carry material consequences. Implementers are warned with respect to SICAP's annual reviews, that failure to achieve contracted targets will precipitate a recouping of monies 'linked to the proportional shortfall' (POBAL, 2016: 69). In contemporary Ireland, the governmentalities of state-sponsored community development are anchored in the everyday through work practices that include group facilitation, advice-giving, conflict management or strategic planning, but equally and increasingly through the various actions associated with the manufacture and management of evidence.

Since recent reforms both generate and hinge upon 'evidence', a politics of knowledge is therefore at stake. This has impacted on how work becomes knowable, while also coinciding with a changing of the guard of accepted experts (Meade, 2012; Power, 2014). Decommissioned in 2008, the CPA had been Government's primary advisor and source of expertise on community development. Ultimately its statutory status, tendency towards advocacy and its normative allegiance to community development processes rendered it disposable when pitted against the neoliberalising rationalities guiding public sector reform. The CES, as a rising governmental actor, promises to make 'relevant, usable evidence available to policy makers, service commissioners, providers and practitioners... [helping] them to generate evidence through their own practice' (2016: n.p.). Philanthropy funded, flexible, adept at moving between contracts, and thus embodying the entrepreneurial spirit of neoliberal times, it has secured a substantial portfolio of research and consultancy, establishing itself as Ireland's 'go to' expert on social service delivery. However, even it has conceded that determining an evidence base for community development is not straightforward. In an irony possibly lost on policy makers already committed to austerity, the *Effective Community Development Programmes* report (Bamber *et al.*, 2010: 15) admits that its deployment of 'the concept of "effective" practice does not refer to principles that have been established beyond doubt by social scientific methods': instead it deploys 'effective' 'in the sense that the term "promising" is used in other fields with a larger social science base'. Presumably, a report entitled *Promising Community Development Programmes* would be a less compelling source of legitimacy for Governments intent on transformation.

Obviously, this paper offers only a partial insight into overlaps between the politics of community development and those of austerity. It has likely fallen for the allure of 'official

discourses' as articulated in 'policy documents' (Larner, 2000: 14): therefore, some qualifications are necessary. Foucault (2009) himself acknowledged that attempts at conducting conduct may fail or be refused and he invoked the concept of 'counter-conduct' to refer to the variety of possible resistances against government. While workers and 'clients' are enrolled as active participants in the transformation of community development, we cannot presume to know if and how 'effectively' they do so. Between the bottom-lines of policy and the frontlines of delivery, there are spaces for agency, flexibilities and subversions in the determination of what community work means. Given the preponderance of women as workers and as activists in the sector (Power, 2014), the work place 'reforms' discussed above are likely to be highly gendered in their real-world effects. A feminist analysis, such as that undertaken by Power (2014), draws attention to how women workers are conducted by, how they in turn conduct and, alternatively, how they might resist, these governmental practices. Additionally, protests by Trade Unions and community workers marked the announcement of the 'winning "bids"' for SICAP contracts (Holland, 2015), while movements like Dublin's Spectacle of Defiance and Hope (2016), assert the rightful place of critique, democracy and creativity in community development. Alternative deployments of community, are evident in the praxis of locally based mobilisations against the water metering and charges regime that has been imposed on Irish citizens since 2014. Together these disparate counter-conducts can be understood as ethically informed interventions in the policy sphere, as attempts to contest and redirect neoliberal rationalities, practices and sources of evidence (Davidson, 2011: 32; Thompson, 2003).

Conclusion

Mitchell Dean (2010: 202-203) proposes that 'the ethos of the welfare state has been displaced by one of "performance government"', through which the various actors, including community groups, that effect social policy are 'placed under the discrete and indirect surveillance of regulatory authorities'. Ireland has long relied upon community development organisations to activate and deliver social services and supports. While acknowledging that community development has always been both a technology of government *and* the subject of government by the state, it is important to acknowledge that forms of government vary in the extent to which they accommodate human agency or the cultivation of critical subjectivities. Neoliberal governmentalities extend the regulation of human subjects through enforced competitiveness, targets-cultures and the insuperable logic of economic efficiency. Beyond the imposed discipline of funding retrenchment, Ireland's government of austerity has been characterised

by: the problematisation and re-signification of community development and its purposes; the fetishisation of effectiveness and efficiency; a re-casting of community development's 'experts'; and the deployment of a knowledge production infrastructure which responsibilises community workers to become hyper-vigilant about outcomes. State-funded community development's fields of visibility and of possibility have been narrowed. It has been diverted from critique, however reformist and consensus-minded, and re-tasked with labour market activation.

Kitchin *et al.* (2012: 1306) observe that Ireland, perhaps not unusually, exhibits a distinctive 'species of neoliberalism', where its political and ideological aspects are down-played as policy makers couch rationalities or decisions in the language of pragmatism and the 'commonsensical'. Preoccupations with 'effectiveness' in community development reflect such tendencies. However, over its history, in Ireland and internationally, community development's effectiveness has always been framed by conflicting expectations, interests and political commitments (Shaw, 2011). Therefore, a critical analysis of 'effectiveness' may be less a case of asking 'what works', than of questioning 'who is asking' and 'why they need to know'. The McCarthy and CES reports provided rationalising cover for neoliberal reforms that occurred within the manufactured imperatives of a 'public' spending crisis. But their problematisations of coherence and efficiency were a louder echo of policy makers' own ambivalences about the variety of community organisations being funded, ambivalences already on record since 2003.

Referencing governmentality studies more generally, McKee (2009: 475) acknowledges how they challenge the assumed coherence and centrality of the state as a governmental actor; yet, she argues, there is still scope to recognise how the state shapes the 'policies that regulate our daily lives', particularly where it retains discretion around funding or budgets. In Ireland, despite the growing emphasis on alternative/philanthropic sponsorship (Forum on Philanthropy and Fundraising, 2012), state agencies continue to dominate the resourcing of community development. The discursive shifts and technical reforms currently being operationalised have practical consequences for how communities experience and how workers enact state-funded Programmes. But these evolving governmentalities do not exhaust all understandings or deployments of community: the activation of the citizenry, however narrowly conceived, always carries within it the seeds of resistance and counter-conduct.

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8.8: Output #8

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Solidarity, organising and tactics of resistance in the 21ˢᵗ Century: social movements and community development praxis in dialogue

Niamh McCrea, Rosie R. Meade and Mae Shaw

Abstract

This article attempts to identify and explore the convergent features of social movements and community development, arguing that they already share a distinctive, if uneasy, alliance around what might be called the politics of democracy. Exploring connections, as well as points of difference, this article suggests that a critical dialogue between the two might, in the longer term, contribute to a positive realignment between social movements and community development groups. In our view, social movement praxis has much to offer community development in reviving and reasserting its more radical potential, by offering untapped opportunities for building community, forging collective identity and imagining political alternatives. Specifically, the article explores why and how protest tactics matter: their political significance and the dilemmas and possibilities they present both for movement participants and community development practitioners. The article, while recognizing the often complex and constraining contexts within which it is deployed, also identifies particular features of community development that may contribute to the building of more grounded and participatory movements. In highlighting the overlapping and progressive commitment of

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social movements and community development organisations, we recognize the acute challenges involved in building support and forging solidarity among disenfranchised peoples. In the final section, we highlight and explore potential sources of and approaches to solidarity, assessing their relative merits for a more politically engaged community development practice.

Solidarity, organising and tactics of resistance in the 21st Century: social movements and community development praxis in dialogue

Niamh McCrea, Rosie R. Meade and Mae Shaw

Introduction

The purpose of this Special Issue is to capture the tactical choices, framing devices and organisational forms of a range of communities and movements that are engaged in dissenting politics at the current historical juncture. Typically, academic analyses of such activism are located within the field of social movement studies rather than in mainstream community development literature, with some notable exceptions (e.g. Popple and Shaw, 1997). Even then, as Cox and Flesher Fominaya (2013) note, the academic field of social movement studies does not fully capture the diversity of motivations, theories, ideas, practices, emotions and ontologies percolating in and around social movements: for example, it disproportionately privileges work from the global north and from Anglophone contexts (MacSheoin, 2016). This article is an attempt to identify and explore the convergent features of social movements and community development and to argue that a dialogue between these fields of praxis would be mutually productive. While this is a challenge for both theory and practice, we hope that it may be helpful in signalling and asserting new forms of solidarity and political possibility at a time when, as Mishra (2016, p. n.p.) argues, 'well-worn pairs of rhetorical opposites, often corresponding to the bitter divisions in our societies, [have] once again been put to work'. As authors who are located in Ireland and Scotland, we acknowledge that the following reflections are largely informed by our own distinctive political and social contexts, but we hope that they reflect the concerns, frustrations and aspirations of the CDJ's readership more generally.

The fields of community development and social movements already share a distinctive, though somewhat uneasy, alliance around what might be called *the politics of democracy*. Both reflect on-going efforts by people across the globe to re-shape their economic,

social, cultural and political contexts; their goals, values and practices often transgress the norms and conventions of organisation, representation and communication associated with liberal-democracy and institutionalised politics (Alvarez *et al.*, 1998); ideologically, tactically and strategically, they face common dilemmas which illuminate the inherent complexity of forging and sustaining the kinds of *solidaristic politics* to which they are both (at least nominally) committed. Exploring connections, as well as points of difference, and reflecting upon the politics of solidarity more generally, this article suggests that a critical dialogue between the two might, in the longer term, contribute to a positive realignment between social movements and community development groups. In particular, we hope that the following reflections on the organisational politics and claims-making of 21st century movements may resonate with practitioners who are grappling with the demoralising effects of managerialist rationalities on their work or who are seeking counter hegemonic ways of framing and expressing collective identity. Contemporary global conditions and their troubling local consequences may in any case necessitate a reclamation and reinvigoration of the transformational potential of community development if it is not to become largely irrelevant, or even injurious, to the experience of marginalised groups and individuals (Meade, Shaw and Banks, 2015).

Community development, social movements and the politics of democracy
Historically, community development can be seen to be the product of two sets of forces and interests: 'pressure from below, which stems broadly from democratic aspiration, the other from above, reflecting the changing needs of the state and broader political interests' (Cook and Shaw, 1996, p. 1). As Newman and Clarke (2016, p. 36) remind us, community development 'is not a singular set of ideas and practices, but has been aligned to very different political projects.' Across time and place, community development has signified and spoken to divergent interests, and it continues to do so today. Similarly, we cannot assume that all social movements are well-springs of authenticity or progressive politics: indeed, some actively seek to reverse processes of democratisation, redistribution, women's liberation and inter-culturalism. Therefore, even when we are sympathetic to their motivations, we should recognise that movements – like the best-intentioned community development initiatives – may 'fail' or flounder and we must be attentive to how their 'practices' may 'contradict their collective values and goals' (Chollett, 2011, p. 296).

In their most progressive forms, however, community development processes and social movements confront our preconceptions about where and how politics should be

conducted, about who does politics, and about what its substance might be. They show that collective organising by ordinary people operates at multiple geographical and political scales. The democratic claims, interests and identities that are validated by large or high profile social movements may inspire or reflect new forms of community building and collective endeavour at the local level. In other words, micro-level engagements can be provoked and emboldened by the imaginaries, organisation and tactics of macro level movements, adding breadth and range to their repertoire, whilst solid community bases and organizing strategies add depth and credibility to movements that are ostensibly challenging globalised economic forces or making demands of the nation state. For example, Voss and Williams (2012) argue that the organizing work of movements such as *Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra* (MST) in Brazil or the *Justice for Janitors* campaigns in the USA has been critical in building local capacity and deepening community participation within those movements, while also generating new and vibrant democratic spaces beyond the normal channels of decision making. These vital interconnections have also stimulated new forms of community/union affiliation in many places (Mayo *et al.*, 2016).

There are synergies too in how community development and social movements can challenge us to reimagine democratic self-government, participatory decision making or even autonomy. Together, they have in various ways contested and posed alternatives to 'the institutional regime of truth production that has defined the era of development' (Escobar, 1992, p. 28), alerting us to the possible limits of 'neutral' expert or professional knowledge and to the environmental and social contradictions generated by advanced capitalism (Klein, 2015). In so doing, they have amplified the voices and interests of subordinated social groups, while eliciting concrete improvements in people's lives through legislative change, policy delivery and political reform (Hearne and Kenna, 2014). At their best, these are mutually reinforcing processes.

Community development groups and social movements have also left their distinctive marks on everyday discourses, practices and forms of interaction (Dominelli, 1995). Their praxis is essentially 'cultural' in the sense that it shapes and is shaped by 'ordinary' life and 'common meanings' (Williams, 1989, p. 4) but equally in the sense that it may mobilise cultural and artistic practices, such as music or song, in the name of communication and awareness raising (Eyerman and Jamison, 1998; Bisset, 2015). Community and movement mobilisations could be said to embody 'the politics of transforming one's more immediate community and one's self' (Meyer, 2012, p. 399) as they reverse processes of cultural misrecognition or exclusion in order to affirm 'diverse' ways of living and being (Cameron, 2007). And, while

rejecting any false opposition between cultural and materialist politics (Moran, 2015), we also contend that the collective action of ordinary people, whether categorised as community development or social movement activity, can reveal and powerfully contest various manifestations of economic inequality, expropriation and exploitation.

Community development in neoliberal times: challenges for democracy, solidarity and dissent

In spite of the history, and enduring presence, of oppositional politics and innovative social critique within community development, we must also acknowledge the compromised, compromising, and increasingly inhospitable environments within which much contemporary practice operates. In fact, it could be argued that the economic and political contexts within which community work is now practised point to diminishing prospects for collective mobilisation, for dissenting politics, and for 'acting in solidarity' (as distinct from 'acting in unison'). As Kolers (2012 p. 368) argues, when 'acting in unison', individuals come together to collectively pursue some ends or means they may happen to share, or have been persuaded to believe they share, based on hegemonic norms. The qualitative difference in *choosing to act in solidarity* is that, in the process, individual interests are necessarily surrendered to the interests of the collective. This presupposes that *acting in solidarity* is dependent upon, or at least profoundly linked with, sustained forms of community building which enable people to learn about and alongside each other and to form human bonds of mutual care and concern. This aspiration clearly has significant implications for the role of the community development practitioner, speaking as it does to a conception of practice which demands collective spaces wherein to engage with communities around their own, often contradictory or negative, experiences of policy rather than constructing those communities as tools or targets of policy delivery.

Arguably, over recent decades, a number of developments have weakened the capacity of community organisations to contribute to such solidarity-building and to a broader collective project of change. Communities have been centrally implicated in the widely noted shift from 'government to governance', whereby 'governing takes place through markets, networks or processes of collaboration among a plurality of agents and agencies' (Newman and Clarke, 2009, p. 46). The 'turn to community' by states, development NGOs (Mueller-Hirth, 2012), global institutions like the World Bank (Gaynor, 2016), and philanthropy (Salamon, 2014), is not a function of neoliberalism alone. The rise of governmental forms such as partnership arrangements 'emerge out of multiple politicized processes' (Larner and Butler, 2005, p. 82),

reflecting complex and even contradictory claims and expectations, and generating outcomes that vary in their democratic potential and social effects. Such processes have been influenced by discourses of participatory democracy, by demands for recognition by subordinated groups, by pre-existing communitarian or corporatist logics within the state, and by long-standing integrationist tendencies among community organisations. Nonetheless governance has, as Brown (2015, p. 122) observes, 'become neoliberalism's primary administrative form'.

While community-based movements have had some successes in challenging and changing policy around welfare, such strategies have become compromised in contexts where self-help and equality have become conflated in a bid to reduce budgets by shifting responsibility downwards (Berner and Phillips, 2005). In the development programmes rolled out under the so-called Post Washington Consensus, for example, it is argued that the mobilisation of community has served as a compensatory mechanism for the social devastation caused by neoliberalised structural readjustment (Gaynor, 2016). Moreover, as community organisations become increasingly tasked with delivering state-defined services, and as state, NGO, and philanthropic funding becomes increasingly hitched to performance criteria, principles of participation and community self-determination have been articulated with, or displaced by, labour-market activation measures and managerialist imperatives (McGrath, 2016; Mueller-Hirth, 2012).

By setting parameters on the goals and scope of democratic participation, these trends risk reducing community development to technocratic, problem-solving approaches which bracket off 'politics, conflict, and deliberation about common values or ends' (Brown, 2015, p. 127). In effect, such funding relationships have tended to prioritise a skills base among community workers and activists that reflects 'their roles as employers and service providers' (Crowley, 2013, p. 154), in turn diminishing and marginalising the disposition and skills required to mobilise communities against policies which adversely affect them. For some, the broad shift from 'government to governance' has granted a status for community development which is welcome, indeed overdue, by creating political opportunities for civil society organisations to participate in policy formulation in local, national and supranational institutions, advancing them 'from being suspicious outsiders to government to being frequently welcomed at negotiating tables in institutional settings' (Lang, 2013, p. 71). However, as Crowley (2013, p. 154) notes, the formalisation and institutionalisation of community development organisations into 'a policy-focused lobby' potentially signals the loss of a key source of their power, namely the 'ability to articulate accurately the concerns of disadvantaged communities and to mobilize local organizations behind their campaigns and

policy demands'. This shift has also, he contends, lessened accountability to communities and created an agenda defined by the priorities of policy rather than by the actual experiences of communities. The situation he describes is one where community development organisations, whether operating nationally or locally, have ceased to deploy more conflictual tactics and strategies as they abandon protest in favour of advocacy.

In light of this highly ambivalent context, we turn to a consideration of why tactics of protest and dissent matter, the political significance they have and the dilemmas they pose. In our view, social movement praxis has much to offer community development in reviving and reasserting its more radical potential, by offering untapped opportunities for building community, forging collective identity and imagining political alternatives.

Taking protest tactics seriously

Protest tactics should be taken seriously because they direct our attention to what people can do, what they are prepared to do and what they think matters. These are not secondary considerations, but are central to addressing the classic dynamic between means and ends. The concept of 'repertoire of contention', developed by Charles Tilly to account for the range of possible means through which movements make 'claims of different kinds on different individuals and groups' (1986, p. 4) hints at the existence of patterns in the deployment of tactics by social movements and at how they are informed by particular logics (Della Porta and Diani, 1999). By extension, community development must negotiate logics associated both with strategic engagement in invited spaces of policy, and those spaces which are created or demanded in pursuit of alternative political expression. This may reconfigure the 'repertoire of contention' available to practitioners in significant ways. Different activist cultures and movement traditions may also need to be negotiated. For example, while recourse to demonstrations, blockades or the carnivalesque are regularly, or even ritually, deployed by social movements, they may be considered suspiciously novel, inappropriate or even counter-productive within mainstream community development practice. At the same time, the opportunity to subvert social norms and to ridicule the powerful can, if introduced skilfully and sensitively, create a laboratory of possibility for those who have become jaded and disillusioned by the limitations of bureaucratic community engagement strategies.

Tactics are crucial to a group or movement's effective communication with itself and its membership *and* to its communication with the wider publics that it seeks to influence. Navigating these divergent responsibilities may beget some sacrifices: political nuance may be

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ironed out in the interests of broader appeal; reflexivity and self-criticism may be side-lined in the name of rapid responsiveness; internal diversity and conflict may be trivialised to ensure coherence; and the character of the membership may be respectibilised in pursuit of credibility. Such dilemmas resonate with the competing imperatives and experiences of many community development organisations where there may be perceived trade-offs between the integrity of processes and the delivery of outcomes, or between the adoption of more consensual and more oppositional styles of engagement (Ife, 2013). Like social movements, community development must concern itself with both long and short-term objectives; with process and outcome; with purpose and practice. Drawing on the kind of democratic organising principles and methods associated with contemporary social movements may, in addition, act to confront ritualistic organisational practices of community development, infusing collective engagement with renewed spirit and motivation. In turn, the strategic work of reconnecting horizontal democratic processes with vertical structures of power may be strengthened by increased confidence and commitment (Shaw and Crowther, 2013).

As noted above, social movements are simultaneously concerned with the development of long-term political strategies and with the more immediate business of identifying effective protest tactics (Johnston, 2015). Protest actions are not just the outcrops of 'strategic decision-making' but are informed by members' 'ideological visions', are 'congruent with their collective identities, and embody the cultural schemas that provide meanings, motives and templates for actions' (Taylor and Van Dyke, 2007, p. 277). Movements may consciously seek to align tactics with their longer-term aspirations, regarding them as manifestations of pre-figurative politics, the enactment of egalitarian relationships in the here and now. For example, ontological commitments to non-violence or the erasure of hierarchy may ensure that some tactics or forms of tactical decision-making are consciously privileged over others. Alternatively, and additionally, movements' decision making around tactics may be influenced by pragmatism, local or cultural context, history, timing, available resources, risks and opportunities (Gamson, 1992; Taylor and Van Dyke, 2007). These variables are equally relevant in the context of community development.

Imogen Tyler (2013, p. 213) observes that 'for disenfranchised populations' there are recurring 'critical and ethical questions' about 'what kinds of protest and protestors can be seen and heard' as well as 'what kinds of resistance are imagined as possible'. As in the context of community development, internal value conflicts, power differentials and intra-group hostilities complicate social movements' deliberative processes. Protest actions that attempt to bear witness to the passion, conviction, sense of purpose or urgency felt by movement participants may

disturb and alienate those outside the movement's familiar habitus (Chatterton, 2006). When protest either threatens or climaxes in violent confrontations or when it significantly discommodes business as usual, movements may be demonised by media, political opponents and unsympathetic onlookers (Meade, 2008). Spectacular tactics may invite publicity, and the prospect of a heightened public awareness of the movement's presence and aspirations, but such publicity also runs the risk of stereotypical, partial and counterproductive media representations that offend the sensibilities of potential allies. Alternatively, attempts to keep protest fluffy (i.e. non-violent), good-humoured and non-threatening may be experienced by some movement participants as a form of self-censorship or deference to prevailing constructions of civility and good citizenship.

To outsiders, and in some cases insiders, protest might appear as (empty) symbolism, as a prelude to the 'real' business of negotiation, partnership and compromise. Protest tactics might be regarded as the reflex-responses of those who are, by definition, *outsiders* and thus as a throwback to a time when poor communities were less recognised, less funded and less embedded in public policy – a retrograde step in the evolution of community development as a professional practice. Against that, we would argue that protest, particularly mass protest, offers a more muscular response to those versions of community development which have become sclerotic or self-serving. Writing in 1968, John Berger described the mass demonstration as an 'assembly which challenges what is given by the mere fact of its coming together' and therefore as a 'rehearsal[s] of revolutionary awareness';

> [They] interrupt the regular life of the streets they march through or of the open spaces they fill. They cut off these areas, and, not yet having the power to occupy them permanently, they transform them into a temporary stage on which they dramatise the power they still lack (Berger, 1968 p. n.p.).

Direct action can be regarded as a 'rehearsal', in the sense that protesters deliberately transgress social, political or legal conventions in preparation for and in performance of future contestations of power and authority. Ostensibly, Berger (1968) observes, demonstrations are congregations of people who serve as a barometer of public opinion, which may explain why authorities tend to talk down the numbers in attendance. However, the importance of demonstrations for protesters themselves at least partly resides in what they bring into being and sustain in the here and now of protest: collective forms of protest give material substance and physical embodiment to what was in effect, until that very moment an 'abstraction' (Berger, 1968, p. n.p.). Ideas like class, community or collectivity are rendered patently tangible. Furthermore, the psychic and emotional power of mass action, particularly for first-

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time participants, should not be under-estimated. Crucially, people's sense of collective identity and possibility is forged *through*, and not only before or after, protest is done. Based on their experiences of taking over or taking back public space, demonstrators are also, to use the parlance of community development, *empowered* to imagine alternative futures which they may co-create:

> The demonstrators' view of the city surrounding their stage also changes. By demonstrating, they manifest a greater freedom and independence – a greater creativity, even although the product is only symbolic – than they can ever achieve individually or collectively when pursuing their regular lives. In their regular pursuits they only modify circumstances; by demonstrating they symbolically oppose their very existence to circumstances. (Berger, 1986, p. n.p.)

It is by extending the democratic imaginary in such ways that social movements might offer vital inspiration to community development practices which may have become institutionalised or dull.

We want to emphasise that, no more than ownership of community development can be ceded to professionals or policy experts, protest or activism cannot be abandoned to a cadre of specialists. Social movement related activism and protest tactics may demand significant investments of courage, risk-taking and fortitude, particularly when confrontations with police, military or other repressive forces are likely. We appreciate that this may, ironically, result in an increased sense of social distance between 'real activists' and publics. Consequently, reflexive movement participants and writers (Andrew X , 1999/2009; Bobel, 2007; Chatterton, 2006) have warned against reifying an 'activist identity', which is embodied by a specialised class of social movement personnel who make key decisions and are at the frontline of movement activities. This may cause the (unwitting) imposition of a 'perfect standard' of activist conduct in terms of commitment, skill and dedication (Bobel, 2007). Against such a standard, we contend that activism is something everyone can do (see Andrew X, 1999/2009, Bobel, 2007).

The question is to what extent can mainstream community development that is increasingly filtered through individualised encounters with 'clients', ritualised engagements with 'community representatives', or the statistics and demographics of quarterly returns, create moments of political possibility such as those described by Berger (1968)? Or indeed are there any features that are specific to community development practice which might support the development of community-based movements? And (how) is it possible to transcend the reified categories of 'activist', 'professional', 'community' and 'movement' as we practise collective action? In her work on labour organising, McAlevey (2016, pp.27-29) usefully

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distinguishes between, 'mobilizing' among people already within activist networks, on the one hand, and deeper forms of 'organizing', which place 'the agency for success with a continually expanding base of ordinary people … who don't consider themselves activists at all', on the other. She argues that the most successful and transformational union campaigns are those whose organising methods are 'deeply embedded in, and reliant on, an understanding of workers in relation to the communities in which they live.' Organising which strategically and systematically marshals workers' community networks, and which strives to 'merge workplace and non-workplace issues', she argues, has mounted the most effective push back against corporate power, securing real and lasting gains. This approach echoes a longstanding though somewhat muffled debate within community development about the appropriate relationship between pedagogical approach and political purpose. For example, an 'activist' strategy which targets 'those already active in their community around social and/or political issues' has historically been advocated by some as a means of accelerating and embedding an explicitly political approach to community development; whilst for others a broader 'network model' seeks to engage with the 'whole community' in order to create spaces in which 'raw' experience can be collectivised and politicised (Shaw and Crowther, 2013). In addition, there is a largely-forgotten, but once influential, historical trace of collaboration between trade unions and community development organisations in support of common interests which is gaining renewed interest (Mayo *et al*., 2016).

As a relationally defined practice, community workers traverse the space between people's intimate and 'private' concerns and the public enactment of community politics. Moreover, and despite their reconfiguration through various forms of performativity and managerialism, community development organisations remain key resources in and for communities. This sustained and deep presence means that community workers continue to carry a legitimacy within poor communities that 'activists' seldom command. Arguably, therefore, the context in which community development takes place – its very *embeddedness* within communities – offers unique potential for forms of 'deep organising' which move beyond invited spaces of participation or officially sanctioned tactics towards a more strategic and effective engagement with the politics of solidarity.

Building solidarity: sources, approaches and challenges

In highlighting the overlapping and progressive commitment of social movements and community development organisations, and in our celebration of the inherent rewards of protest

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and dissent, we should not underestimate the difficulties involved in building support and forging solidarity among disenfranchised peoples. Thinking about solidarity as an active social and political process raises critical questions for community development and social movements about the politics of 'representational power': who speaks and who is silenced; what are defined as legitimate and illegitimate sources of solidarity; which collectivities are recognised and which are unknown or excluded; and what is the nature of agency for those involved? These questions have particular resonance for the politics of 'community', which can famously be deployed as easily to reinforce unequal existing relations of power as to promote solidarity in challenging inequality (Shaw, 2008). Arguably, these on-going discursive and political tensions over which struggles really count have generated a more diffuse and variegated conception of solidarity. Whilst this might be seen as an inevitable, even healthy, reflection of the current state of contentious politics, it leaves the concept of solidarity vulnerable to appropriation whereby, like community, it becomes instrumentalised; as likely to reconcile as to challenge incommensurable relationships of power. In this section, we turn to consideration of potential *sources* of and *approaches* to solidarity and assess their relative merits for a more politically engaged community development practice.

In considering solidarity as a political value, attention is generally directed to the zones and hierarchies of inclusion and exclusion it implies. As Kip (2016) argues, the concept of solidarity assumes 'shared opposition to a common, excluded enemy to whom solidarity cannot be extended'. This process of naming the enemy has been central to the success of those totemic struggles memorialized in various parts of the world (Von Kotze and Walters, 2017), and in myriad local and domestic contexts. However, there is now a palpable sense of anxiety, not to say disagreement, about who or what is the common enemy and who might (or should) be excluded from solidarity's sheltering embrace. For example, as we write, the fall-out from the Brexit vote in the UK and the election to the US Presidency of Donald Trump continues apace. These events and allied political developments, such as the resurgence of far-right politics across Europe, and internecine struggles in diverse places, point to a fracturing of solidarity between citizens, particularly in regard to shared norms and values. They suggest that the grievances of many of those disadvantaged by neoliberal restructuring have not been channelled in egalitarian directions. Rather, they have been captured by a pseudo anti-elitism that is 'emptied … of real class politics' (Parenti, 2016, p. n.p.) and which fosters and exploits racial, religious and other resentments. In addition, at both local and global levels 'we live in a world of intensified encounters with difference' through 'displacement, movement and violence' (Gaztambide-Fernandez, 2012, p. 42) and these give rise both to socially divisive

forms of solidarity and to those based on humane support and succour. In this febrile and disturbing atmosphere, the appeal to diverse meanings of solidarity can be seen to express profound existential crises as to who the 'real' enemy is, even as solidarity becomes itself an existential necessity if unaccountable sources of power are to be exposed, named and challenged.

In reviewing the broad sociological literature on solidarity, Oosterlynck et al (2016) identity four separate, but not mutually exclusive, *sources* of solidarity, a typology that we find helpful in thinking about the contemporary politics of solidarity and democratic engagement.

Interdependence (see Oosterlynck *et al*., 2016, p. 766) is not simply a statement of the obvious – that we are in a profound sense 'all in it together', as is clear from the most cursory analysis of the catastrophic effects of climate change (Klein, 2015) – but also a statement of intent which is common to both community development and social movement aspirations. Solidarity here derives not only from objective self-interest, but also from the active building of trust in other humans with whom we are existentially interdependent. This raises critical questions about who constitutes such 'others', and how these discriminations can come to constitute 'otherness' in ways that can also be unjust or socially divisive, as disability activists in particular have taught us (Oliver, 1996). In particular, it raises questions for how we enact critical agency within globalised structural relations of power that increasingly enforce competitive individualism and commodified forms of interdependence, the consequences of which are now threatening those citizenship rights won over time through sustained social and political struggle (see Lynch *et al.*, 2009).

Shared norms and values suggests a more communitarian conception of solidarity, 'grounded in notions of reciprocity, shared beliefs, common values, joint practices and collective histories' (Oosterlynck *et al*., 2016, p. 766). This largely Durkheimian version has informed both support for welfare states (where solidarity is notionally and practically expressed through universalism) and the anti-statism of many welfare societies, which integrate the free market with a theory of social solidarity based on hierarchy and voluntarism (Beresford, 2016). We would argue that attention should be given to how hegemonic norms and values are formed, circulated and internalised, thus leaving many people isolated and discontented, but still alienated from potential sources of solidarity (Moran, 2015). Such a critical engagement with the presumption of shared norms and values is fertile territory for a form of community development with a social movement consciousness that seeks to make power visible and thereby negotiable.

Struggle emerges chiefly from Marxian and Weberian traditions, and combines both instrumental and normative aspects '[forging] the meeting of shared objective interests with common values of comradeship that are nurtured in the process' (Oosterlynck *et al.*, 2016, p. 768) – or 'the movement' – so that symbolic identification with 'the struggle' often remains, even when objective conditions alter. Whilst deep identification of this kind has unarguably been decisive in maintaining an egalitarian imaginary in desperate contexts of disenfranchisement, dispossession or abuse, for those who are less familiar or do not identify with this traditional notion of 'the struggle', such unconditional allegiance can be experienced as outdated or even exclusionary. Negotiating 'the tension between unity and difference' is a key dynamic for newer generations of activists, particularly in contexts where once-heroic movements may have become compromised by the realities of political power (Cooper and Luckett, 2017; Geddes, 2016).

Encounter refers to 'the more contingent forms of human action, conscious or unconscious, that bind people together' (Oosterlynck *et al.*, 2016, p. 768) and is particularly productive ground for enacting dialogue between community development and social movements. The possibilities for solidarity here are highly dependent on the conditions that enable or impede collective identification in the moment of encounter. For example, a social welfare system in which diversity is supported as a public good, itself often a positive outcome of social movement struggles past and present, facilitates what Phillips (1998) calls a 'politics of presence' through which encounter with 'the other' can potentially expand, complement or challenge existing sources of solidarity. Similarly, legislation which 'promotes' social inclusion, however limited in scope, can create the conditions in which 'difference' is mutually encountered – on the bus, in the park, in the workplace – thereby potentially expanding the community of equals in mundane but authentic ways. Alternatively, a politics of absence made visible by social movement arguments and tactics can create a narrative appeal which generates wider support and, in the process, reframe welfare subjects as social and political agents (Cameron, 2007). As Cooper and Luckett (2017, p. 16) show from their work in South Africa, 'encounters of solidarity entail acts of trust, risking one's future and well-being with strangers, as well as tensions between unity and difference, universalism and particularism'. The very process of collectively negotiating these tensions can in itself strengthen the solidaristic potential of such encounters if handled with skill, respect and sensitivity. The creative dialectic between 'policy' and 'politics' intrinsic to community development can provide a significant space for such a process of negotiation.

As already established, the tactics or repertoires of action chosen by movements and community development groups are critical in advocating, amplifying, enacting and (potentially) animating the politics of solidarity. To this we can add the insights of Gaztambide-Fernandez (2012), who usefully identifies three *approaches* to solidarity which may also be useful in challenging and enlivening contemporary community development practice, and it is to these that we now turn.

A commitment to *relational solidarity* underscores a deliberative and purposeful commitment to interdependence and reciprocity which resonates with the moral orientations of both community development and social movements, in theory at least. This involves an understanding that 'individual subjects do not *enter* into relationships, but rather subjects are *made in* and through relationships' (Gaztimbide-Fernandez, 2012, p. 52). To echo John Berger (1968) solidarity is made by acting in solidarity. This has implications for community development in creating the 'conditions of possibility' that both stimulate challenging encounters, and offer convivial spaces for making relationships, building collective support, common identity and solidarity.

Transitive solidarity (Gaztimbide-Fernandez, 2012, p. 54-56) is about taking sides *with*, alongside, in empathetic and respectful ways. This may pose a particular challenge for practitioners who are constrained by their conditions of employment; who may even be expected to 'deliver' instrumental versions of solidarity as a proxy for addressing the real sources of inequality. The capacity to practise a strategic politics of translation between policy and politics could be decisive for practitioners to 'hear and amplify those voices speaking to the moment, and to deep concerns and dissatisfactions' (Shaw, 2017 forthcoming). Such strategic spaces are also vital for protecting the autonomy of local groups to take sides in their own interests, in situations where practitioners may be professionally constrained or compromised.

The notion of *creative solidarity* suggests both process and outcome. To express oneself creatively with others is intrinsically solidaristic because it demands both collective imagination and discipline. At the same time, outcomes cannot be pre-determined precisely because there is always a transcendent dimension which 'might rearrange the symbolic content of human exchanges' in unforeseen and astonishing ways (Gaztambide-Fernandez, 2012, p. 56). Creative solidarity requires a view of culture as unsettled, a site of action, exchange and contention, and it speaks to a view of praxis, for both community development and social movements, that is concerned with working together to unleash our own and each other's creative potential.

Conclusion

Together, these sources of and approaches to solidarity offer a framework for thinking about the relationship between solidarity, organising and tactics of resistance in the twenty first century. However, given the ambivalent history and contested nature of community development, we would suggest that a fourth approach to solidarity will be required if opportunities to pursue the first three (Gaztambide-Fernandez, 2012) are to be realised in any significant way. We would argue that a sense of *reflexive solidarity* – to always be prepared to see community development and social movement activity as potentially part of the problem, as much as part of the solution, for democratic life – is necessary to place creative and constructive doubt at the centre of processes of collective action. This orientation would ensure that ongoing personal and political critique forms part of collective action's ontological basis. Apart from anything else, reflexivity may help to resist bogus claims about the 'medicinal properties' of community development, or the populist hype of social movement success, whilst under-delivering on genuine democratic engagement. Creating and retaining a critical distance, even from movements and organisations to which we are committed, is a pre-requisite for expanding the potential for democratic and solidaristic practice whilst limiting its negative potential; for drawing on and nurturing the capacity for solidarity in hard times.

An openness to realigning with social movements in new and interesting ways could reclaim, for a new generation, an approach to community development which would meaningfully reconfigure the parameters of professional and practitioner agency for a 21st century context. We are convinced that, because the praxis of community development *and* social movements ultimately reflects enduring efforts by marginalised people across the world to understand, analyse, challenge and change disempowering and demeaning conditions, there is much to be gained from a deeper and more sustained dialogue between them.

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Community Arts, Community Development and the 'Impossibility' and 'Necessity' of Cultural Democracy

Rosie R. Meade

This chapter considers the 'impossibility' and 'necessity' (see St Louis, 2009) of cultural democracy as a foundational principle for community arts activities. The phrase 'impossibility' and 'necessity, is itself a borrowing and inversion of the words of Stuart Hall (2000), when he pondered the political and discursive utility of the concept 'identity'. And while this chapter is not about 'identity' or its theorisation, the phrase helps to capture a sense of ambivalence and provisionality. It evokes the importance of, as Brett St Louis (2009: 560) suggests with respect to Hall's original provocation, 'grappling with a profound problematic', whether and how it might be 'necessary to inhabit and work within the constraints' of a confining or limiting social position, 'while attempting to move beyond it towards a freer human existence'.

As will be argued in this chapter, a commitment to cultural democracy is *necessary* because it counters dominant understandings of 'culture' and the 'arts'[43] that are shaped by and are reflective of social hierarchies and inequalities. Class and educational barriers mediate engagement with the arts (Holden, 2010; Lunn and Kelly, 2008; Matarasso, 2007) and there is widespread misrecognition of the cultural agency of 'disadvantaged' or 'socially excluded'

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[43] I acknowledge that 'culture' is an even more porous, contested and potentially inclusive concept that the 'arts' and that the arts are just one dimension of culture, which can also be understood in an 'anthropological sense' (Duncombe, 2007: 490). But in the interests of clarity and specificity, it is culture that manifests as arts works, arts processes or arts objects that is the primary concern of this chapter.

communities (Cameron, 2016; McGonagle, 2007; Willis, 2005). Against this, the promise of cultural democracy may inspire or infuse community arts processes that nurture participatory and collectivised forms of cultural consumption, production and distribution. Cultural democracy thus implies a 'democratising of culture', whereby access to and representation within mainstream arts and cultural institutions is equalised. Crucially, though, it simultaneously proposes greater public recognition of and support for the diversity of expressive forms, aesthetic practices and spaces of production within society.

This chapter begins with my interpretation of and response to the 'Voices from Shandon' arts programme that took place in Cork, Ireland and culminated in 2013. My, admittedly impressionistic, account of that programme is followed by a fuller theorisation of the concept of cultural democracy, which, I argue, must be underpinned by the kind of cultural materialist analysis that is proposed by Williams (1981) and Moran (2015). Cultural materialism draws attention to the political economy of (community) arts; it demands recognition of the materiality of all cultural production and its embeddedness within a set of really existing economic relationships.

The chapter then discusses the diverse origins of community arts in Ireland acknowledging that the term *community arts* embraces a diversity of methods, expectations and outcomes, thus exhibiting a certain semantic mutability. For Tony Fegan (2003) community arts practice is distinguished by its anchoring in particular communities: community members actively identify, organise and develop artistic projects that reflect their interests and enthusiasms, or that speak to their social experiences. Activities are collective and collaborative, and collaboration may or may not include professional artists. This praxis is perhaps distinguishable from *community based art*, where programmes or initiatives mirror and are physically present in given communities, but where there is less emphasis on ownership or authorship on the part of community members themselves. In such instances professional artists or arts organisations may play a more decisive leadership and creative role (Fegan, 2003). To add to the confusion, the terms *community arts* and *community based arts* are often used interchangeably with the concept of *socially engaged arts.* This latter term is, however, also suggestive of a consciously political stance by arts practitioners to work in solidarity with communities in the hope that the 'arts might help lead out on change, positive change' (O'Baoill, 2012: n.p.). Even if it were possible to establish precisely and convincingly the nuances in this terminology, rigid definitions are unlikely to be sustainable in practice where *community arts* tends to be used as a catchall term for the very wide variety of activities undertaken by, in, with and about communities. Furthermore, given communities and artists

de facto reliance on statutory or philanthropic funding to sustain arts activities, the determination of aims and the evaluation of outcomes may be contentious, particularly if the arts are expected to serve ameliorative or therapeutic functions (Kester, 2004). Indeed it is likely that such tensions will sound familiar to community development workers, because just like community development, diverse applications and assumptions mean that we cannot take democratic commitments for granted.

For the purposes of this chapter community development is understood simply as a 'process through which ordinary people collectively attempt to influence their life chances' (Meade, Shaw and Banks, 2016: 4). Behind this apparent simplicity much complexity prevails. Conceptions of community may be rooted in places, occupational or social relationships, common interests or identities, religious or ethnic affiliations, and they may invite local, national and even transnational expressions of solidarity. Communities may appear to be already formed and buoyant or, alternatively, in states of emergence or decline. The impetus for development may be determined and led by members of the putative community, while in other instances the process of community development may be initiated by state, professional, philanthropic or other 'outside' actors (Meade, Shaw and Banks, 2016). The focus of 'development' may embrace infrastructure and services; employment and education opportunities; policy or legal changes; transformations in power, political and democratic configurations; or new forms of social or interpersonal relationship. Processes may even position the arts and culture as central to their development agendas; so that the enhancement or recognition of people's participation in the cultural life of their communities is seen as valid in its own right. *In such cases community arts processes can be regarded as a form of community development.* Against this, however, community arts activities and projects may be regarded as elements that 'enhance and improve the community development enterprise rather than as substantive stand-alone entities' (Cullen, 1995: 14). Therefore, they may entice people to get involved in projects and they may contribute to the processes of capacity building, education, personal development and skills learning that are themselves seen to constitute steps towards citizen empowerment and participation (Cullen, 1995; Kay, 2000). *Here community arts processes may be viewed as adjuncts to or instruments of community development.* Whatever the terms of their mutual engagement, community arts and community development activities typically invoke common 'values' such as participation, empowerment and the validation of process over outcomes (Ife, 2013); and for both there are real or recurring challenges in ensuring that those values become more than buzz words or rhetorical claims (Banks, 2011; Shaw, 2013).

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In the final section I apply a cultural materialist analysis to the political and economic factors shaping and inhibiting community arts processes at the current historical juncture. Paying particular attention to the Irish context, I highlight arts sector ambivalences regarding the purposes and value of community arts; public policy's tendency to instrumentalise the arts; and wider trends in the global political economy, which responsibilise artists and communities to engage in competitive forms of creativity and urban regeneration. The aspiration of cultural democracy seeks acknowledgement of and a contestation with these 'impossibilities'. And to this critique community arts praxis may add the aesthetic statements of communities as they communicate in and through culture.

What if...

Cork is a hilly city, and one of the best views of its higgledy-piggeldy, irregular streetscapes can be found in Bell's Field at the top of Richmond Hill. While off the beaten track for most tourists, Cork City Council has planned, since 2007, to 'regenerate' the field, in order to optimise visitor up-take of is 'panoramic' qualities (Irish Examiner, 2012). From Bell's Field it is possible to distinguish many of Cork's landmarks, among them St Anne's Church, possibly its best known building. St Anne's distinctive limestone and sandstone tower is itself a magnet for tourists, who come to ring the bells and treat locals to renditions of 'Three Blind Mice' and other classics. The four clock-faces near the top of the tower have been notoriously unreliable time-keepers, leading to its ironic designation as the 'four-faced liar', while above them is the golden salmon-shaped weather vane widely known as 'de goldie fish. St Anne's is central to the spatial geography and the iconography of Cork City, and in recognition of this status, between 2011 and 2013, it became the focal point for an arts project that sought to affirm local meaning-making and cultural expression.

Arturo Escobar (2001) observes that understandings of place have tended to be downplayed in the social and human sciences: place has typically been deposed in favour of space, the former suggestive of narrow particularity, the latter presenting unlimited and open-ended possibility. Against this Escobar (2001) reminds us that cultural practice is inevitably and necessarily 'emplaced', that places are simultaneously sites of production and contestation. They are produced by the interplay between broader, even global, political-economic forces *and* everyday social practices, relationships and imaginings (see also Massey, 2004). Therefore we must acknowledge

> that place, body, and environment integrate with each other; that places gather
>
> things, thoughts, and memories in particular configurations; and that place,

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more an event that (sic) a thing, is characterized by openness rather than by a

unitary self-identity. (Escobar, 2001; 143)

Cork Community Artlink[44] (CCAL) is a city based arts organisation that has been in existence since 1993 (CCAL, 2011). In its various arts programmes, CCAL collaborates with community groups and individuals, in the ethical and aesthetic re-imagining of place, space and local environments; including, public streets, schools, community centres, parks, libraries, institutional settings, hoardings, signposts, walls, benches or even bollards. Following its move to Shandon in 2004, and to coincide with Cork's European City of Culture, CCAL launched the 'What if...' programme in 2005 (CCAL, n.d.a). As a title 'What if...' evokes inquiry, new possibilities and longings, and the programme is spatially and socially grounded in Cork's urban neighbourhoods. There have been six iterations of 'What If...' since 2005, four of which have centred on Shandon (2006, 2008, 2009, 2011-2013), albeit still engaging volunteers and communities of identity and interest from within and outside the area (CCAL, n.d.a). Arguably, 'What if...' thus promotes an inclusive and porous conception of community in place, one that proposes on-going dialogue about what is and what might be and about the very constitution of community itself. Potentially, it seeks to transcend the traps of nostalgia, essentialism, reification and homogeneity that render invocations of community so problematic (Bauman, 2001; Mulligan, 2015; Rose, 1997; The Critical Art Ensemble, 2002).

What if ...' is a Public Art programme for creative research, exploration and project development', which emphasises 'partnership with communities and groups to develop temporary, outdoor art works which explore the dynamics of urban public space' (CCAL, n.d.b). 2009's 'What if...' project, 'the Big Wash Up', involved the power-washing of giant reproductions of photographs of Shandon's past onto the walls of its most prominent buildings. This temporary installation was the culmination of an extensive process of trust-building, community engagement and cultural co-production that involved local residents along with, artist Philippe Chevrinais and organisations such as Artitillerie (France), Northside Folklore Project, the Firkin Crane, Shandon Street Festival, St Mary's Road Library and Shandon Youth Club[45] (CCAL, n.d.c; Grant-Smith and Matthews, 2015). In their analysis of the consultations and participatory processes around which 'the Big Wash Up' was structured, Grant-Smith and Matthews (2015) point to the crucial, and necessarily challenging, role of negotiation and

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[44] I have been closely involved with CCAL since 2000 and am currently on its board of directors. I acknowledge this 'insider' status and recognise that my response to its work is framed by that experience. All of the views and analyses expressed in this chapter are my own, and in no way attributable to CCAL.
[45] See CCAL (n.d.d) for technical aspects of the power-washing process.

deliberation in this kind of cultural praxis. 'Community-based and site-specific public art requires a relationship between the artist, artistic institutions, the community and the local site. The relationship is based on an understanding of the history of the area and the constituency of the art audience, the social relevance of the project, and the input of multiple stakeholders' (Grant-Smith and Matthews, 2015; 148).

Reverting to Bell's Field and the summer of 2013; gazing across at Shandon you could see 1,000 flags on 2,000 metres of rope suspended from St Anne's. This was the site specific installation and culmination of CCAL's 'What if…' project, 'Voices from Shandon'[46]. From that distance the tower radiated colour in all directions, the constant flickering of flags creating motion around the building's solidity, while the ropes literally and figuratively anchored the flags and tower in 'place'[47]. Viewed from afar, this was Shandon's joyful gift to the city, what might be regarded as one example of how a 'grounded community' (Mulligan, 2015; 349) or community in place might project itself beyond its spatial borders. As Mulligan (2015: 349) notes, '"grounded communities" only manifest themselves to the extent that they are constantly created and recreated', and 'Voices from Shandon' asserted the importance of the visual, of song and the imagination for community building and solidarity. Moving closer, walking around Shandon a better sense of the multiplicity of 'visual voices' (CCAL, n.d.e) on display was possible. This was not just a function of quantity, the sheer number of flags, but was evident from the idiosyncrasies and creative choices presented in the individual artworks.[48] Paul Willis (2005; 74) contends, 'everyday life is full of expressions, signs and symbols though which individuals and groups creatively establish their very presence, as well as important elements of their purpose, identity and meaning'. 'Voices from Shandon' functioned as a kind of public gallery for the 'sense-full-ness' of participants' 'lived aesthetics' (Willis, 2005; 76), and how they might use material/fabric to signify their presence in the city.

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[46] 'Voices from Shandon' was a three year programme, culminating in the flag raising of June 15th 2013. Workshops with a range of community, youth, education and voluntary groups, and individual volunteers, centred on working with textiles and 'invited participants to create their own visual voice through a creative exploration of flag making, symbolism and community' (CCAL, n.d.e). The process was supported by Cork City Council's Arts Office and the Arts Council. Although site specific, it had a strong international dimension, with French artists Didier Gallot Lavallée and Andre Verrier, Bulgaria's *Art Machina*, and coinciding with Ireland's EU presidency (Arts Council, 2013a). 'Voices from Shandon' was inter-disciplinary, using multi-media and incorporating 'visual voices' and 'singing voices'. Its project team included a composer, song-writer and music facilitator, working with around 100 children from local schools to co-create songs to celebrate the flags' unveiling (words and music at http://www.whatif.ie/voices/)

[47] This account is necessarily partial – based on my reception of the images. It does not evaluate or represent the experiences of participants or the intentions of facilitators. (For video and textual accounts, see CCAL, 2013; CCAL, n.d.e; Hegarty, 2013; LocalTVIreland, 2013).

[48] CCAL has created an online gallery (http://www.whatif.ie/voices/) of the flags and the written testimonials of their makers.

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In the contemporary world we are besieged by images, and increasingly images of brands, that call out for publicity, consumption, envy, and emulation (Berger, 1972; Klein, 2000; Willis, 2005). 'Voices from Shandon' might be regarded as a speaking back to this visual assault. And in their speaking back, individuals expressed their love of nature's really existing creatures - penguins, dogs, cats, snakes, tigers, horses, ducks, swans – and more magical hybrids – the unicorn/sheep, the mouse/cat, dragons, zombies, faeries, angels and cartoon characters. Some worked with concepts – evoking love, family, community, craziness, coolness, strength, uncertainty, health, passion – while others represented place – Shandon, Poland, Cork, home towns, the beach – and others, symbols of identity – barrel top wagons, caravans. Against common assumptions that the purpose of community art might be to 'bring' arts or culture to the people, participants claimed rich cultural lives – with testimonials to the arts of drawing, dancing, music-making, skateboarding, soccer-playing, gardening, reading, hurling, painting, gaming – and manifold illustrations of a fondness for colour and form in their own right. There were memories of the past and pledges for the future – to travel to space, to be a princess, to become a vet – as well as political commitments and celebrations of self – pride in people's own bodies, hands, faces. Representations of objects and work-tools hung alongside impressions of the sun, moon and stars. As the flag display continued over the summer of 2013, it exhibited what Declan McGonagle (2007: 428) proposes as a defining principle for democratic arts practice and policy, 'a parity of esteem' for 'different intentions and the different forms those intentions take'.

Cultural democracy: the arts as more than our 'grace after meals'

> Art can perform many functions. For pages and pages, the various functions could be listed like a catalog of stylistic -isms: Art can represent its commissioners and producers; it can be a definer and caretaker of identity; it can affect snobby allures and satiate the bourgeois hunger for knowledge and possession. Art can fatten up the leisure time of the bored masses; it can serve as an object of financial speculation; it can transmit feelings and cause one's heart to vibrate. Furthermore, the many functions are also enmeshed in one another.
> (WochenKlausur, n.d.: n.p.)

This quotation comes from the Vienna based WochenKlausur artist group, which since 1993 has participated in arts and socio-political interventions in settings that include Berlin, Limerick, Leeds and New York. Its Limerick project was conceived as a free cinema for immigrants, running out of the Belltable Arts Centre in the city. A project in Plymouth (UK)

focused on the need for a community centre in Efford; prompting the self-organisation of a committee of local residents and the crafting of a mobile tent as a temporary centre and symbol of the community's continuing desire for long-term solution. From WochenKlausur's (n.d.) perspective, art should confront societal problems and in turn stimulate and propose progressive responses. Conceptualised thus it has an affinity with community development processes: they too seek to engender improvements in people's every-day, political and social circumstances through actions or *interventions* that may kick-start processes of collective identity formation and empowerment. There are affinities too in the need to read art and community development dialectically, to acknowledge co-existing progressive and regressive properties, and the often conflicting expectations they are expected to serve – a tendency that is evoked starkly in the WochenKlausur quote.

Proponents of critical forms of community development highlight the ways by which power, social structures, ideology and human agency interact to shape relationships or outcomes in community contexts (Kenny, 2002; Ife, 2013; Meade, Shaw and Banks, 2016; Shaw, 2013). Critical praxis means taking seriously the politics of material conditions *and* of our ways of naming, thinking and talking about such conditions and the people occupying them. If the arts are to contribute to or operate as a form of democratic community development practice then they too demand sustained critical interrogation. In this regard, Raymond Williams' book *The Long Revolution* (1965) offers helpful conceptual resources. Williams decries the long-standing convention whereby the 'relevance' of the arts requires special pleading because they are viewed as a luxury – a 'grace after meals' (1965: 133) – disconnected from the necessary business of economic and societal management, or indeed community development. He links this dubious status to two paradoxical yet overlapping discourses. On the one hand 'art is degraded', portrayed as 'mere reflection' of the polity and economy, on which it is assumed 'to be parasitic', whilst on the other hand it is 'idealized', represented as a transcendent 'sphere of aesthetics' and thus as removed from real life (Williams, 1965: 134). These attributions are not always externally imposed. Artists and critics often cultivate and find sanctuary in images of the artist as an outlier genius or of arts works as difficult and unreadable to the masses. Kester (2004: 34), for example, explores how some tendencies in modernism and Abstract Expression, with their distinctive conception of the avant-garde, seemed to 'naturalize the elitism of art as a historically inevitable condition'.

The continuing relevance of Williams' analysis was graphically revealed with the announcement of recession in Ireland after 2008. As mainstream political and media commentary fixated on the causes of our collective predicament, the salience of global

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economic restructuring and processes of financialisation (Dukelow, 2015) tended to be ignored in favour of a relentless reckoning of individual failures, personal greed and the vulgarity or ostentation of the consumerist Irish (O'Flynn et al, 2014: Meade, 2012a). If this 'democratizing of blame' (O'Flynn et al, 2014: 926) helped to rationalise the extension of austerity and neoliberalism's disciplinary logics (Dukelow, 2015: Mercille, 2013[49]), it was often juxtaposed with claims that the comparatively uncorrupted/incorruptible artistic and cultural fields could salvage the country's reputation (Meade, 2012a). Advocates for the arts began to self-consciously and uncritically talk about their contribution to international competitiveness, 'brand Ireland', 'the smart economy' or 'tourism', resorting to 'defensive instrumentalism' (Belfiore, 2012) to offset the threat of funding retrenchment[50]. Special pleading in defence of arts budgets hinged on the idea of a transcendent arts sphere while simultaneously privileging its commodifiable rather than its cultural value.

However compelling they may seem, it is important that we contest efforts to either elevate or degrade the arts. This calls for a materialist analysis that is soldered to a wider vision of cultural democracy. What Williams (1981: 64-5; also Moran, 2015) calls 'cultural materialism is the analysis of all forms of signification' or meaning making 'within the actual means and conditions of their production'. It begins by acknowledging that art-works are never untainted by their historical contexts or their physical and social environments: they are produced, albeit sometimes to express resistance or transgression, by situated, embodied actors. They are experiments in communication, which demand an audience beyond the self (Kester, 2004: Williams, 1965). The cultivation of taste, dispositions or the passing of judgment that constructs objects or practices as art is necessarily 'social', and as such potentially contestable. Culture is a site of hierarchy and a source of capital that in turn apportions social benefits and marginality (Bourdieu, 1986). The arts draw upon materials or materiality, often producing commodities, the exchange value of which inflect and are inflected by the unequal social and economic organisation of resources, wealth, time and leisure (Bryan-Wilson, 2009; Williams, 1965; 1981: Moran, 2015). Although the form, content, aesthetics or imputed meanings of arts-

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[49] Mercille (2013: 11) reviewed Irish newspaper's – the Irish *Times, Irish Independent* and *Sunday Independent* - representations of government's 'fiscal consolidation' polices from January 1, 2008 to December 31, 2012 , finding 'significant support for fiscal consolidation' (2013: 11) and comparatively little evidence of opposition to austerity.

[50] 'Defensive instrumentalism' was predictable given the scale of austerity post-2008. Government budget proposals for 2010 targeted €760 million in social welfare cuts, followed in 2011 by reductions of an estimated €873 million (Mercille, 2013). Harvey (2012: 13) contends that between 2008 and 2012 the community and voluntary sectors were disproportionately impacted by retrenchment; initiatives against drugs, family support projects and the Local Community Development Programme lost up to 29%, 17% and 35% of funding respectively.

works are not simply determined by these contextual elements, they inevitably leave their imprint. Therefore, a cultural materialist analysis insists 'upon the material and productive nature of cultural forms – and correlatively, the "cultural" character of "the material world"' (Moran, 2015: 63). It urges an on-going critical engagement with the interdependencies of politics, policy, economy, aesthetics and arts practice, and so is a pre-requisite for understanding why cultural democracy remains a necessary if often contradictory or seemingly impossible project.

When community development or arts processes grapple seriously with the concept of 'cultural democracy', they challenge dominant understandings of how we think and talk about aesthetics and the arts. Firstly communities and their members are positioned not merely as audiences or consumers, but as active agents of and through culture. This upends inherited assumptions – internalised by many of us - about who is 'arty' and what qualifies as 'real' art (Holden, 2010; McGonagle, 2007; Willis, 2005).   It raises significant challenges for policy makers: determining a balance between privileging 'excellence' and democratising participation has been a recurring dilemma for cultural policy and institutions (Benson, 1992). Secondly, a commitment to cultural democracy demands that access to, recognition within and opportunities to engage with the arts are seen as centrally *relevant* to people's lives, and by implication, as falling within the purview of community development; and not just as an instrument to be put to work towards 'real' development.   Advocates such as Francois Matarasso designate cultural expression as a 'fundamental human right' that 'allows individuals and groups to define themselves and their beliefs, and not only be defined by others' (2007: 457), although the legacies of economic, political and social inequality internationally ensure that there are significant differentials in how that right is realised (Holden, 2010; Lunn and Kelly, 2008). In 2005 in Dublin the community-led Fatima Regeneration Board, reflecting that working class area's distinctive history of collaborative and participatory arts practice, asserted residents' right to 'an active and enriching cultural life in which the arts are a primary source of inspiration and learning' (Whyte, 2005: 74). Notably, Fatima Regeneration Board ensured that an explicit arts and cultural strategy was embedded within its wider strategy for community development and regeneration. This strategy valued arts participation as a right in itself and not merely as an adjunct to or tool for more crucial development outcomes (Whyte, 2005). Significantly, it also specified the policy, infrastructural, educational and financial commitments required to make that right more widely amenable to community members.

Thirdly, cultural democracy means recognising that culture is already and always 'happening'. For Williams (1989: 8) culture is 'ordinary' in the sense of reflecting forms of

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sociability, behaviours, or beliefs that 'are made by living, made and remade'. Ordinary culture deploys or integrates the arts to enhance its capacity for communication, and the resulting 'lived aesthetics' (Willis, 2005) may range across the emotions, the imaginative or quotidian, past, present and future. Appeals to/for cultural democracy acknowledge and demand parity of esteem for the diverse media, materials and practices through which people share meanings and expectations of the world (McGonagle, 2007). And as with processes of community development, there are tensions between validating such communication on its own terms *and* hitching it some other instrumental or governmental project. These tensions are explored in more detail in the final section of the chapter, but in advance of that discussion I explore the origins and purposes of community arts in a little more detail.

The (cultural) politics of community arts.

In 1951, the *Arts Act*, provided for the establishment of the Arts Council, which still plays *the* central role in implementing cultural policy and funding the arts in Ireland[51]. In the post-Independence period, innovation in arts policy and practice were hindered by the ideological hegemony of Catholic nationalism, the blending of law and piety in the determination of censorship codes, and the overarching commitment of the burgeoning state to fiscal rectitude and the avoidance of economic crisis (Benson, 1992; Kennedy, 1990/1991). With the establishment of the Arts Council, Ireland emulated a governmental project to activate public appreciation of modern art that was already underway in the UK (Fitzgerald, 2004). The Irish Council was expected to 'stimulate public interest in the arts', 'promote the knowledge, appreciation and practice of the arts', 'assist in improving the standard of the arts', and 'organise or assist in the organising of exhibitions (within or without the State) of works of art and artistic craftsmanship' (Ireland, 1951).

The establishment of the Arts Council was progressive because it normalised and activated the principle of public subsidy for and popular encounters with the arts. Nonetheless, as Clancy (2004) and Benson (1992) suggest, since its inception the Council has had to navigate and reconcile divergent expectations; the (sometimes) conflicting views of its members regarding the Council's role; the subordinated status of the arts within government policy and budgets; competing resource demands from individual arts organisations, institutions and

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[51] Following implementation of the 2003 *Arts Act*, Local Authorities are obliged to 'prepare and implement plans for the development of the arts within [their] functional area', which might include 'stimulating public interest', promoting 'knowledge, appreciation and practice' and 'improving standards in the arts' (Ireland, 2003).

professionals; and the critique offered by artists and citizens committed to the principles of cultural democracy. In recent decades the Arts Council has built commitments to wider arts participation into its strategic plans and it has interrogated the scale of cultural exclusion and inequality in Ireland[52]. However, a strategic review of the Council, published in 2014, highlighted 'an almost exclusive emphasis on the production/consumption model of the arts' where there seems 'little emphasis on engagement and participation as a fundamental and valued aspect of the arts in Irish society' (Arts Council Strategic Review Steering Group, 2014: 5). It also noted that the Council has been stymied by the absence of a clear or unified national arts policy and the constraints intrinsic to its role in disbursing state funding to professional arts. Clearly, the birth and subsequent form of community arts practice in Ireland needs to be understood with reference to the political economy of this institutional and policy context.

The emergence of community arts can be traced to the convergence of a number of developments in the political and artistic spheres internationally during the 1960s and 70s. Among them can be included the New Social Movements that posited 'culture' and 'identity' as politically significant sites of oppression and struggle, while often utilising songs, drama, dance or poetry to critique existing and imagine alternative social relationships (Eyerman and Jamison, 1998; Cameron, 2016). In the Republic of Ireland the discourses and practices of community arts were consciously adopted by disparate groups in Dublin and other cities from the mid-1970s onwards: e.g. Dublin's Grapevine Arts Centre, Waterford Arts for All, Theatre Omnibus in Limerick and Sligo Community Arts Group (Bowles, 1992; Fitzgerald, 2004). As the language of cultural democracy gained traction, there was growing criticism of structurally embedded inequalities in arts access and opportunities (Benson, 1992; Clancy, 2004) but the politics of community arts embraced other material issues as well. Fitzgerald (2004) and Bowles (1992) highlight how creative collaborations between artists and activists responded to crises of unemployment, marginalisation and alienation in urban areas, while also demonstrating the agency of the working class communities living there. Notably, these beginnings also coincided with a period when community solutions to social problems seemed particularly attractive to policy makers. From the 1960s onward re-discoveries of poverty, in the USA, UK, the EEC and Ireland, were followed by governmental programmes that sought

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[52] The Council's (2010) Strategic Overview 2011-2013 prioritised broadening participation and the creation of new and more socially inclusive audiences for the arts. Those commitments were re-iterated in its more recent strategy (Arts Council, 2013b) and respond to recurring evidence of significant class-based, geographical, educational, age-related and other societal barriers arts engagement in Ireland (Lunn and Kelly, 2008; Moore, 1997).

to 'empower' the poor through strategies of community participation and development (Cruikshank, 1999: Meade, 2012b).

Adopting an internationalist perspective we can factor in other formative influences on the cultural politics and aspirations of community arts. Among these are Dada and Situationism's deconstructive questioning of the nature of art, its social purpose, and the status of the artist in the face of the 20th Century's surges towards militarism, massification and consumer fetishism (Debord,1967/1995; Sanouillet, 2009). Berthold Brecht and Augusto Boal's radical re-interpretation of the authorship, form and staging of theatre breached borders between actors and audiences, and embedded a dynamic social praxis within the 'performance' of plays. Today Boal's dialogical *Theatre of the Oppressed* and *Forum Theatre* are extensively used in community development settings to explore issues of power and inequality as they impact people's intimate, familial, local, institutional and national contexts[53]. Colin Cameron (2016) discusses the centrality of poetry, cabaret and comedy to the fermentation of disabled people's collective and political identity. He also highlights the vital contribution of the disability arts movement, including organisations such as the London Disability Arts Forum, to the eventual formulation of an alternative 'affirmation' model of disability. Some arts institutions have sought to fashion new relationships with communities that have been regarded (implicitly) as non-patrons of museums and galleries (Davoren, 1999; Gibson, 2008; McGonagle, 2007). At their best such efforts have not only democratised access to the physical space of the institution or 'diversified' audiences, they have embraced a more substantive vision of cultural democracy, by ensuring that communities' own aesthetic statements have been recognised and displayed as art of equal standing[54].

Community arts practice is multi-disciplinary; supporting cultural production though painting, murals, sculpture, movement, music, poetry, storytelling, puppetry, theatre, video, photography, ICT and a range of other media or materials. It can revitalise and revalidate 'forgotten' art forms like quilting (Clover, 2007), or traditional crafts and trades, such as

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[53] For an account of *Theatre of the Oppressed* praxis and its application in the UK, see Cardboard Citizens (n.d.) which uses *Forum Theatre* to engage with currently and formerly homeless adults. Abah (2007) discusses *Theatre of the Oppressed* and *Forum Theatre* 's contribution to participatory development in Nigeria. The group Stut, based in Utrecht, the Netherlands, used theatre with Dutch, Moroccan and Turkish communities to explore shared ways of living and sociability, and to probe perceived differences and contentious issues such as discrimination (Van Erven, 2013). Connolly and Hussey (2013) interrogate some tensions in the use of such methods with community based or adult learner groups.

[54] The partnership established between the Irish Museum of Modern Art (IMMA) and St Michael's Family Resource Centre in Inchicore during the 1990s synthesised commitments to community development, socially engaged arts practice and adult education. It generated powerful exhibitions of collaborative art that were hosted in IMMA; *Unspoken Truths* (1991-96) and *Once is too Much* (1995-98) (McGonagle, 2007: Davoren, 1999).

carriage or wagon-making[55].   The collectivist orientation of community arts practice may disrupt what The Critical Art Ensemble (2002: 24) denotes as the 'totalizing belief that social and aesthetic value are encoded in the being of gifted individuals'. They argue that this belief remains foundational to the value-base and structures of professional artist education. Participants, facilitators and funders may differentially emphasise community arts' status as social critique, moral-improvement, leisure, fun, self-expression or mutuality. Practices may seek to move the consumption or performance of art out of the concert-hall, theatre or gallery and into streetscapes, public spaces and social services (Abah, 2007; Cardboard Citizens, n.d.; Grant-Smith and Matthews, 2015). Alternatively or even simultaneously they may represent a taking back or re-imagining of museums and institutions (Davoren, 1999; McGonagle, 2007). Finally, community arts processes may reinforce or solidify an existing community's sense of itself, but they may engage more dialectically and dynamically with the idea of community, highlighting fissures and power imbalances that both shape internal relationships and those with the 'outside' world (Rose, 1997).

However, there are tensions in community arts praxis that remind us of some recurring challenges for community development. Often although certainly not always, community arts processes are initiated as collaborations between an artist or group of artists and a community. In their optimal form these are occasions of skill-sharing, the overturning of preconceptions, and opportunities for the making of arts works that reflect the authorship of diverse participants. But to fashion and maintain *democratic* processes demands an acknowledgment of and a confrontation with the differential forms of power and interests that may arise within such partnerships. Kester (2004: 139) observes that artists may regard themselves as working with communities in 'need of empowerment' or that they judge as somehow alien.   As with community development, such judgments, along with the assumption that communities require professional interventions in order to 'better' themselves, are expressions of governmental power (Cruikshank, 1999).   This power might well be resisted or renegotiated by the communities and artists involved, and thus may not be a stumbling block to deeper dialogue and partnership. It is, nonetheless, important to recognise traces of paternalism or what Kester

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[55] Coinciding with Cork's designation as European City of Culture in 2005, the Cork Traveller Women's Network initiated a participatory arts project centred on the building of a barrel-top wagon. The forced assimilation of Irish Travellers has marginalised their nomadic heritage and lifestyle. This project drew on Traveller traditions of carpentry, design, wheel-making, upholstery and decorative arts to collaboratively build the wagon; a symbolic representation of shared identity.   It was later exhibited in Cork Public Museum (O'Connell, 2005).

(2004) calls 'Victorian reform' in some discourses and interventions associated with community arts.

Evidently arts facilitators may fall prey to this tendency even when their practice seeks to transcend a narrow vision of service to communities (Kester, 2004) and to subvert structural inequalities. Against this a materialist informed conception of cultural democracy recognises community members as cultural producers by right and disposition; therefore affirming that community art participants are *already* active, critical subjects in the world and not merely objects of intercession. Furthermore, a cultural materialist framework (Moran, 2015; Williams, 1981) makes us attentive to the resourcing, outcomes and ownership of collaborative arts processes. It engenders questions like, who gets paid and who works for free? What are the working conditions of facilitators and volunteers (Harvie, 2011)? Are artists 'doing community work' in the absence of alternative opportunities for professional development in the demonstrably exploitative creative industries (McGuigan, 2009; McRobbie, 2011)? Do artworks provoke nuanced understandings of a given community or do they turn 'the site into an exciting, fashionable, exotic, disaster-scene destination' (Harvie, 2011: 119)? Whose names and reputations are built by collaborative practice? And to what extent might a residency in a 'disadvantaged community' enhance the street-cred and market value of an individual artists' portfolio? Or is it more an encumbrance when individualism and signature performance are so highly prized in the arts world?

Posing these questions is not an attempt to demean community arts practice – especially since critically engaged workers and facilitators continuously wrestle with their implications (Connolly and Hussey, 2013; Hussey, 1999; Murphy, 2013). Instead it is an assertion that cultural democratisation demands on-going interrogations of the material, human and professional relationships within any such cultural practices.

The 'impossibility' of cultural democracy?

A cultural materialist framework also helps us to identify the economic, political and policy contingencies that limit community arts' democratic potential. Again there are strong parallels with community development, in that recurring problems with funding, infrastructure and employment conditions, undermine the sustainability of arts projects. Public subsidy for community arts is especially precarious, scattered and ad hoc; it is provided by an inconsistent range of statutory bodies, many of which are more directly concerned with other social goals, e.g. health or employment (Clancy, 2004; Creative Communities, 2013; Joint Committee, 2014). A recent Oireachtas (i.e. government) Joint Committee (2014: 12) acknowledged that

'[m]any arts organisations have to cope, on a continuous basis, with insecurity of tenure in the premises they occupy… they have ongoing difficulties in meeting their day-to-day administrative expenses. The current system of providing once-off grants or grants for specific programmes does not take account of these difficulties'. Furthermore, the normalisation of austerity post-2008 resulted in withdrawals or rationing of social services, the winding down of many community development initiatives and the implementation of new income levies and charges (Harvey, 2012). Notwithstanding lobbying by arts organisations to at least maintain existing grants (Meade, 2012a), austerity had significant repercussions for the arts, with an estimated 30% reduction in the funding of the Arts Council between 2008 and 2013 (Arts Council, 2013c). And as noted already, a political and policy context where the arts must constantly prove their 'brand' relevance, is not conducive to economic redistribution in favour of cultural democratisation.

Transformations in the Irish community development landscape may have further implications for community arts practice. During the 1990s and early 2000s the state's conception of community development and its interactions with community groups were primarily couched in the discourse of 'partnership'. This brought increases in the scope and range of statutory support for community development programmes. While partnerships were not always seamless or lacking in conflict, it did appear as if successive governments were now committed to resourcing community development as a social inclusion/anti-poverty strategy (Meade, 2012b). However, in recent years the state's commitment has become more fragile and contested. There have been controversial reforms to and realignments of high profile programmes: between 2009 and 2015, the Community Development Programme was integrated with the Local Development Social Inclusion Programme and became the Local and Community Development Programme, which in turn was rationalised to become the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme. Such changes are not merely cosmetic; they signal a recalibration of the state's expectations of community workers and the implementation of new governmental techniques (McGrath, 2015; Meade, 2012b). Oversight has been transferred from local management committees or partnerships to the local government system; community development priorities are heavily weighted towards work activation and service delivery; there are increased expectations of value for money, evidence based practice and the quantification of inputs and outputs; and community workers are responsibilised to operate within more 'clearly defined parameters' reflecting government demands that its priorities are 'more effectively translated and focused' (McGrath, 2015: 11).

Given the proximity and often overlapping character of community arts and community development, and their shared discourses of empowerment and participation, these transformations may prove inimical to the project of cultural democracy. They reflect a centralisation of power and control within government, and the extension of a managerialist and performance culture to community programmes. If and when arts facilitators and artists are commissioned to contribute to social inclusion initiatives, they will be expected to fall into line with centrally prescribed targets and monitoring systems. While this does not render impossible arts processes that are critical, resistant and founded on communities' own cultural priorities, at the very least the space for alternative visions or purposes within mainstream community development has been narrowed considerably.

We might also think critically about why it is assumed that the arts can alleviate social exclusion, and thus begin to question the extent to which the culture should be instrumentalised in the name of local or national welfare objectives. In the UK there has been much debate about the content and tone of cultural policy under New Labour, where arts programmes were tasked with generating social impacts and mitigating urban alienation, unemployment, ill-health, or crime (Hewison, 2014). In Ireland this has been replicated in the Oireachtas Joint Committee's (2014) concern that the arts 'combat disadvantage'. Critics contend that social impacts are often exaggerated or poorly demonstrated and, more fundamentally, that these expectations reflect an instrumentalist view of the arts that ultimately locks them into the kind of managerialist 'targets culture' that was actively cultivated by New Labour (Belfiore, 2012; Belfiore and Bennett, 2010; Gibson, 2008; Gray, 2008; Hewison, 2014 Clive Gray (2008) directly links such instrumentalism to the ascendance of New Public Management in the UK's public sector and, as noted above, it is apparent that centrally determined concepts of value, purpose and accountability are shaping the direction of the Irish arts and community sectors also (McGrath, 2015; Meade, 2012a, 2012b) .

There is a risk of slippage between problematizing cultural exclusion or inequality and freighting arts programmes with a responsibility to redress deeper structural contradictions. The cordiality, fun, distraction and spirit of collective enterprise that may be stimulated by arts projects may alleviate aspects of alienation and personal disaffection that are consequences of social inequality. Alan Kay (2000) has recorded how arts activities may supplement processes of urban regeneration by supporting personal development, improving the look and feel of an area, and encouraging participants to engage with further training and education. But social exclusion is a function of factors that include, income inequality, hierarchies of wealth and opportunity, precarious work, and institutional racism, and it is exacerbated by the

retrenchment of welfare and the dismantling of public services. It cannot be undone by the buzz factor of arts participation alone: to claim otherwise is to displace politics.

Finally there is another invidious but politically powerful form of instrumentalism, one that recasts culture and creativity as servants of investment, marketization and profit. In 2013 the then Irish Arts Minister, Jimmy Deenihan, responded to Dáil questions about cultural policy as follows:

> The arts underpin policies in attracting foreign direct investment, in the creation of an imaginative labour force, in establishing an innovative environment in which the creative and cultural industries can thrive and in the area of cultural tourism. The arts are a significant economic contributor and employer in their own right and they are also important building blocks for those economic policies the Government has identified as crucial for our economic recovery.
> (Dáil Éireann, 18/09/2013)

In neo-liberalised capitalism the insatiable desire for new markets and commodities, ensures that all categories of citizens – the artists and the rest of us – are responsibilised to 'create and sustain the central elements of economic well-being' (Rose, 1999: 141). The concept of creativity, embodied by the entrepreneurial self, is central to the discourses and rationalities of contemporary neoliberalisation, running alongside the glorification of knowledge/information societies, intellectual property, and the credo of ceaseless innovation (Osborne, 2003; Peck, 2005). Richard Florida's (2002) bestselling manifesto for urban and economic regeneration, *The Rise of the Creative Class*, argued that 'creatives', such as artists or scientists, are attracted by socially tolerant, pluralistic and welcoming neighbourhoods. Their presence provides an economic stimulus of its own through their contribution to the creative industries, but it also transforms cities into the kind of 'cool' places (McGuigan, 2009) that can better compete for additional investment. Minister Deenihan, although not explicitly naming them, appears to agree that 'creatives' enhance the look, feel and spirit of local economies, thus boosting global competitiveness. According to Florida (2002: 249) the 3 Ts of economic development are 'technology, talent and tolerance', acclaiming Austin (Texas, USA) and (pre-bust) Dublin (Ireland) as singularly effective in harnessing the energy of their creative classes. Cities aspiring to emulate their achievements should note their thriving music scenes, their success in attracting high-tech industry and their 'attention to the creative ecosystem in which all forms of creativity can take root and thrive' (Florida, 2002: 298).

There is much that can be said about the limitations of the Irish development paradigm adopted during the first decade of the 21st Century (Dukelow, 2015), and Dublin's ersatz

coolness brings cold comfort in the face of austerity and recession. As cities internationally invoke Florida's tenets to plan for economic regeneration, where arts scenes and cultural workers must become storm-troopers of urban renewal, critics highlight some recurring contradictions (McGuigan, 2009; McLean, 2014; McRobbie, 2011; Peck, 2005). Negative consequences abound: gentrification, with working class communities especially vulnerable to dislocation; increased housing costs linked to the commodification of land; employment in the creative industries that is highly stratified in respect of rewards, status, and tenure; and the displacement of public policy, where every strategy from the provision of parks – remember the plans for Bell's Field mentioned at the start of this chapter – to the allocation of rehearsal space is subjugated to the greater good of competiveness. The recruitment of communities and artists to the project of urban regeneration needs to be carefully analysed in light of the dominance of this creative agenda. Are they being invited to aestheticise neighbourhoods towards future economic exploitation; exploitation which ultimately aggravates inequality and social differentiation? Or can arts processes hold out for alternative models of regeneration, such as envisaged by the Fatima communities of Dublin (Whyte, 2005) - models where, to borrow from Escobar (2011), culture sits proudly and defiantly in places?

Conclusion

Clearly many of the practices of community arts that have been referenced here are easily reconciled with a robust vision of cultural democracy. But it is also apparent that perennial issues of power, ownership and purpose must be navigated whenever communities interact with artists, institutions and the state. A cultural materialist framework helps us to recognise how and why neither communities nor artists can be regarded as sole authors of their destinies when it comes to cultural production. The arts are not removed from or transcendent of material conditions: contextual factors such as, the wider economy, prevailing forms of social stratification, the distribution of wealth and inequality, all help to constitute what we recognise as arts works. However, cultural materialism as outlined by Williams (1981) and Moran (2015) doesn't boil culture down to these economic determinants alone. It recognises that cultural production is on-going, universal and open-ended, and it thus cautions against the dominant forms of instrumentalism that steers arts, regeneration, and, we might add, community development policies internationally in these neoliberal times.

As Gibson (2008) contends, instrumentalist conceptions of the arts are not entirely new and she cites examples of Victorian and early 20th Century cultural polices that sought to positively impact the population's health and moral standing or that promised tangible social

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and economic dividends. It may even be impossible to avoid some form of instrumentalism when talking about the arts: to assert that art communicates, beautifies, or educates, is to instrumentalise it somewhat, while claims of 'art for art's sake' lack the urgency of other political and social claims in the face of austerity or economic crisis. But by repeatedly pegging the worth of the arts to some other policy or outcome, we persist in our denial that cultural practice is central to human interaction and relationships. We refuse to recognise that art forms such as poetry, music and drama make possible a desire for communication, expression or, indeed, community that is valid on its own terms. And we relinquish our responsibility to find ways of thinking and talking about aesthetics, why they matter to people, and why they should matter in community development, thus ceding that vital dimension of our humanity to the cultural 'experts', the institutions and maybe also the market.

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Contemporary Irish Youth Work Policy and Practice: a Governmental Analysis

Elizabeth Kiely and Rosie R. Meade

Abstract

This paper analyses the governmental rationalities informing youth work policy in the contemporary Irish context. Since 2008, the implementation of neoliberalised austerity in Ireland has been hugely destructive in terms of closure of young people's services and disruptions to youth work provision. Adopting a governmentality perspective, we argue that recent youth work policy developments are also undermining the integrity of youth work as youth work. Against current governmental rationalities, which privilege 'evidence based' practice, value for money approaches and the delivery of prescribed outcomes, we argue for a re-imagining of youth work for a post-neoliberal, post-evidence based practice world.

Introduction

In Ireland, as in other contexts, a set of progressive and commonly identifiable values have been widely understood as giving youth work its meaning and form, and as distinguishing it from other ways of engaging with young people (Davies[i], 2005; Kiely, 2009)[56]. Youth work's distinctive ethos is most discernible in practice that is young person led and young person centred; in activities that involve association with other young people; and where befriending and trusting relationships between youth worker and young people are built up incrementally. However, it is increasingly apparent that these values are marginal in the newly-prescribed policy based articulations of youth work that have taken hold in the Republic of Ireland in recent decades (Kiely, 2009). In Ireland, we have seen the bifurcation of youth work into 'targeted' and 'universal' youth services, a process that commenced in the early 1990s and is predicated on a number of significant distinctions. Universal services receive minimal state resources, are staffed largely by volunteers and offer open ended, generic activities. By contrast, targeted services, which are expected to prioritise the personal and social development of 'disadvantaged' groups of young people, are staffed by professionally qualified youth workers and allocated substantially greater resources from the state. As we show in this paper it is predominantly 'targeted' youth work, which is being reconfigured as a set of programmatic interventions for the articulation, application and expected delivery of pre-defined outputs and desired outcomes. Following McGimpsey's (2017) analysis of the implications of late neo-liberal policy making for youth in the UK, we regard bifurcation as having facilitated the commodification of Irish youth work to the extent that it now exhibits some of the hallmarks of what Batsleer (2010: 160) dubs 'liquid youth work'. This refers to youth work that is promoted by policy makers because of its short-lived, project based, individualised forms of engagement and its privileging of demonstrable outcomes, quick 'successes' and capacity for replication and rebranding.

So great is the impact of such policy generated demands on contemporary practice in the UK that *In Defence of Youth Work* mobilised to uphold a democratic model whereby 'young people freely engage[d] in universal open-access facilities offering informal education opportunities, addressing issues based on their own perceived concerns and interests' (Hughes *et. al.*, 2014: 4). This paper contends that with each new government policy articulation, Irish

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[56] In making this assertion, the authors recognise that the terminology used to denote 'youth work', and the values and assumptions underpinning policy and practice, are themselves contested and that the trends outlined in this paper may not be reflective of those in non-European contexts.

youth work is in danger of becoming ever more 'liquid' and estranged from such a democratic model.

This paper analyses the governmental rationalities informing youth work policy in the contemporary Irish context. In so doing we clarify how we as authors are adopting and applying a governmentality perspective, and proceed to analyse what we see as the distinctly neoliberal rationalities at play in the current moment. Since 2008, the implementation of neoliberalised austerity has been hugely destructive in terms of the closure of young people's services and disruptions to youth work provision. However, we argue that the integrity of youth work *as youth work* is at risk of being eroded still further by policy makers' growing fetish for 'evidence based' practice, value for money approaches and the delivery of prescribed outcomes. While the accelerating influence of such rationalities over British youth work has been critiqued (e.g. Bradford and Cullen, 2014; Hughes et. al., 2014; De St. Croix, 2016, 2017; McGimpsey, 2017), in Ireland they have not been given commensurate academic attention. Additionally, governmentality approaches recognise that *multiple* actors across the polity, civil society and private sector seek to act upon and shape contemporary governmental practices. This article considers the emergence of high-profile research and evidence generating 'experts' in particular, with the Centre for Effective Services perhaps the most prominent in the Irish case, and how they seek to legitimise and embed these evolving youth work rationalities within the practice environment.

A Backdrop of Austerity

Ireland's economic collapse was quickly reconstructed as both a fiscal and public spending crisis, and as necessitating new forms of discipline in welfare delivery (Allen, 2012; Dukelow, 2015). Between 2008 and 2014, Irish Governments introduced a succession of budgets which reduced specific welfare payments, particularly those for young people, limited entitlement to 'universal' benefits, introduced new forms of taxation and social charges, and instituted payment regimes for services such as water that had been largely 'free' at the point of consumption. While it became commonplace for media commentators and political leaders to frame acquiescence to austerity as a moral imperative and to talk of the *entire* Irish population 'sharing the pain' (Meade, 2012), evidence suggests that the scale and consequences of retrenchment were differentially experienced across society, with class and age related factors significantly mediating impacts on quality of life (National Economic and Social Council, 2013; Watson et al., 2016; van Lanen, 2017). The National Economic and Social Council (2013: 17) observed that young people were 'hardest hit by the crisis' as rates of unemployment

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among this cohort were demonstrably higher than those for the wider population. The proportion of young people in Ireland not in education, employment or training rose sharply during the Recession from an average of 11% in 2006 to 22% in 2011 and, in 2014, Ireland had the highest rate of young people in receipt of unemployment and disability benefit in the OECD (OECD, 2016). Over one quarter of young people in Ireland was receiving one of these payments at some point during a twelve month period compared to less than 10% across the OECD (OECD, 2016).

Furthermore, as in Britain where funding cuts sent youth work into steep decline (Smith, 2013; Bradford and Cullen, 2014; Hughes *et. al.*, 2014), Ireland's regime of austerity had profound implications for youth work organisations in terms of the sustainability of their resource base, staffing and ability to respond to growing demand. Harvey's (2014) research has revealed that comparatively speaking, reductions in public subsidy disproportionately impacted the Irish community and voluntary sectors. Funding for youth organisations and special youth projects combined fell from €90.5 million in 2008 to €50.53million in 2015, a reduction of 44.1% (Harvey, 2014: 11). Notably, 'overall government current spending fell -7.1% over 2008-2014 (€53.4bn to €49.6bn)' (Harvey, 2014: 10).

In Ireland, the 'crisis' did not only engender withdrawals of state funding, it signalled an intensification of concerns about the economies, performance, impacts and effectiveness of public, community and youth services. In 2009, amidst a fanfare of publicity and media speculation, a Special Group was appointed by Government to identify cutbacks of €5.3 billion (approx. within a year) and staff reductions of 17,300 across the public sector and state funded programmes. The resulting *Report of Special Group on Public Service Numbers and Expenditure Programmes* (McCarthy, 2009a, 2009b) legitimised and prescribed the roll-out of austerity, while rationalising Government's more general recasting of the crisis as primarily a problem of inefficiencies in the public sector. Significantly, the report's (McCarthy, 2009a: viii) terms of reference highlighted

i. the need to identify and prioritise particular output targets and areas; ii. the achievement of greater efficiency and economy in the delivery of all services; iii. the scope for rationalising and streamlining delivery of public services in the consumers' interest.

Thus, it proposed a rational and quantifiable basis for the on-going delivery of services that would be premised on a top-down model of accountability. Such moves, as we show in later sections, were accentuated by parallel policy and programme developments in Irish youth work and the privileging of 'evidence based approaches'. Taken together we recognise the role of these developments in re-shaping the rationalities, judgments and assumptions informing

the *government* of state funded youth work. Before looking more closely at their specific implications, we first clarify how we are using this concept of *government* and integrating a Foucaldian analysis of governmentality within our discussion.

Youth Work as Government

With his account of governmentality, Foucault draws upon and extends his conception of power, where power is understood as dispersed and relational; as neither the property nor possession of one or other actor but instead as assuming different forms within different social relationships. While acknowledging that society is marked by 'nonegalitarian' relationships, which may even be experienced as 'major dominations', he maintains nonetheless that 'there is no binary and all-encompassing opposition between rulers and ruled at the root of power relations' (Foucault, 1978: 94). Crucially, Foucault understands power as productive – it produces distinctive ways of acting, thinking, being, relating, and understanding – rather than as exclusively prohibitive or repressive. For example, his analysis of sexuality does not seek to discern

> whether one says yes or no to sex, whether one formulates prohibitions or permissions, whether one asserts its importance or denies its effects, or whether one refines the words one uses to designate it; but to account for the fact that it is spoken about, to discover who does the speaking, the positions and viewpoints from which they speak, the institutions that prompt people to speak about it, and which store and distribute the things that are said. (Foucault, 1978: 11)

There is a strong discursive turn in Foucault's analytical preoccupations, he is interested in what is said, but he also seeks to strike at what is behind what is said, the kinds of values, concerns and rationalities that motivate speakers, how they construct, problematise and proffer solutions to social 'issues'.

Such concerns are replicated in governmentality studies, but here the focus is more specifically on 'government' and the forms it takes within liberal and neo-liberal contexts. Government is understood as the 'conduct of conduct': as the multifarious interventions, exhortations, pledges, discourses and actions that seek to *direct* behaviour in desirable ways (Rose and Miller, 1992; Rose, 2000). 'Conduct' simultaneously implies 'the activity of conducting', how 'one conducts oneself', how one 'lets oneself be conducted' or 'is conducted' and the way one 'behaves' as a consequence of being conducted (Foucault, 2009: 193). Against the backdrop of neoliberalisation, where much of the responsibility for the management and delivery of social goods has been outsourced, government is not solely the occupation of *the*

Government (or its proxy the state apparatus): across society and the economy a range of actors, operating at diverse scales, and sometimes in competition with each other, address themselves to the problems of government. Therefore, as Rose (2000: 323) explains, government occurs in 'different spaces', stretching from the nation to the office, the global polity to the family home, from the individual to the institution. It also occurs through 'different technologies' 'linking together forms of judgment, modes of perception, practices of calculation, types of authority, architectural forms, machinery and all manner of technical devices with the aspiration of producing certain outcomes in terms of the conduct of the governed' (Rose, 2000: 323).

In essence, governmentality studies interrogate the rationalities (or *mentalities*) that inform specific efforts at government. Who is seeking to conduct conduct and how is government justified and enacted? What ways of acting and being (subjectivities) are validated and, by implication, what ways are denied? What (troublesome) behaviours or actors are being targeted, for what purposes and through what technologies? Which regimes of truth – sources of authority, expertise, knowledge, measurement – are called upon to justify and operationalise government? What forms of accountability are demanded from the subjects of government? Governmentality studies also recognise 'the historical variability and situational contingency of the *problems* that have seemed appropriate to be governed' (Rose, 2000: 322, emphasis in original). Therefore this paper asks, what new governmental rationalities, technologies and experts are emerging in fields such as youth work, given the dominance of neoliberalisation and managerialism? Are previously acceptable forms of conduct - among youth organisations, young people or youth workers - now being problematised or even negated?

Foucault's (2009) discussion of governmentality paralleled his analysis of 'security', reflecting his concern with if and how liberal institutions could govern populations in ways that rendered freedom compatible with security. Policy makers' privileging of 'security' constrains the scope of freedom so that subjects are exhorted to act 'according to the standards of civility, orderliness and reason required for the proper functioning of state agencies, markets, households and other aspects of social life' (Hindess. 1997: 268). Today, neoliberal discourses prioritise the expansion of market based competition above other social and economic goals. While there is much associated talk of 'freedom' in the market economy/society, an excess of or the 'wrong' kinds of liberty as expressed by citizens such as young people might disrupt the practices of self-discipline and restraint upon which the economic system is parasitic. Consequently, across the social and welfare spheres, neoliberal governmentalities typically

seek to activate entrepreneurial, responsible, individualised expressions of self among clients and service users (Pyykkönen, 2015: 18; Larner, 2000: 13).

We are particularly interested in the kinds of expertise, knowledge claims and technologies being mobilised in Irish youth work policy at the current historical juncture: how they seek to act upon and shape the conduct of youth organisations, youth workers and, ultimately, young people. The analysis presented here primarily attends to government as it has been articulated in recent policy *documents*; namely, the National Quality Standards Framework for Youth Work, Youthwork: A Systematic Map of the Literature, The Value for Money and Policy Review of Youth Programmes, Better Outcomes Brighter Futures and the National Youth Strategy. A focus on documents, while rich in its evocations of the discourses and rationalities of government, is necessarily partial and incomplete: we acknowledge the value of and scope for ethnographic research that illuminates the quotidian, localised, and messy applications of governmental technologies and techniques in real-life contexts (e.g. St Croix, 2017). Additionally, we want to identify some important caveats with respect to our adoption of a governmentality approach.

Firstly, we appreciate that neither state agencies nor Government Departments solely and arbitrarily determine the forms practice takes; they interact, collaborate, conflict and negotiate with a range of NGOs, voluntary youth organisations, academics, advocacy groups, practitioners and committed actors who assert varying visions of what youth work is and should be (Devlin, 2010; Kiely, 2009; McMahon, 2009; Swirak, 2015). For instance, the embedding of professionalisation and professionalism within Irish youth work, following the establishment of the North South Education and Training Standards Committee for Youth Work (NSETS) in 2006,[57] has seen an expansion in the number of accredited programmes being offered by Irish Third Level Institutions. Educators, like the authors of this paper, are also imbricated in the government of professional subjectivities as we provide students 'with suitable opportunities to develop further towards the goal of professionalism' (NSETS, 2013: 13). Secondly, we accept that efforts at government may incite resistance from subjects who 'struggle against the processes implemented for conducting others' and selves (Foucault, 2009: 201, also Davidson, 2011; Death, 2010). Young people, youth workers, and youth organisations accommodate, but they may also refuse, subvert and in rarer instances revolt

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[57] NSETS' membership is itself composed of Government appointees for both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland alongside representatives of the voluntary youth sector. Its own structure thus reflects a more general 'partnership approach' that claims to support the 'representation of all the key stakeholders in youth work' (NSETS, 2013: 4).

against the forms of government that act upon them. For example, When Anti-Social Behaviour Order legislation was proposed in Ireland in 2005, it was strongly supported by Government political parties but opposed by groups and organisations in civil society including key youth organisations (Garrett, 2007). Some of those organisations came together to establish an unofficial ASBO watchdog website to monitor the use of these orders. A much-diluted version of the measure was subsequently legally instituted and only a handful of ASBOs have been issued since their introduction.   Thus, when critiquing the implications of policy or the rationalities informing it, we cannot and do not presume that policy 'outcomes' are guaranteed by intentions.

Thirdly, we propose that with respect to youth policy, and as with other social policy fields (McKee, 2009; Meade, 2017), the state remains a site where there is a concentration of power. Because it is the primary source of funding for the Irish youth work sector, and is thus positioned to exert significant influence over youth work agendas in this jurisdiction, it features prominently in this analysis of the Irish context.   The approach to governmentality being adopted is, therefore, generally sympathetic to Foucault's 'method of decentering the state' with its attentiveness to the micro politics or practices of civil society, while still rejecting an analytical approach that drifts too far '*beyond* the state' or that ignores the remaining vestiges and forms of 'state-centred power' (Dean and Villadsen, 2016: 11 emphasis in original).

Fourthly, there is the question of the 'novelty' of the developments described. Arguably over its long history, youth work practice has consistently sought to shape the conduct of young people, by facilitating, supporting and promoting desired forms of personal development, critical awakening or social education. From a governmentality perspective, it can appear that youth work is always and inevitably concerned with the government of young people, with the regulation or modification of their conduct in what can be very divergent ways. Thompson (2003: 114) suggests that while Foucault sought to 'understand how we come to want our own subjection', and accede to constraining forms of government, his ultimate goal was to 'identify the resources that might enable us to effectively contest this disposition'. Accordingly, we contend that there is scope to make normative judgements about and propose ethical commitments for youth work; to propose that some models and approaches contribute more to human freedom and are more open to the expression of alternative subjectivities than others. For example, it is worth remembering that for a brief period over thirty years ago, a more expansive understanding of youth work was promulgated in the Report of the National Youth Policy Committee, [commonly called the Costello Report] than that which came to dominate policy making subsequently. It was one that potentially valued a critical social education for

young people and their democratic participation in structural change. It asserted that youth work

> must be addressed to the developmental needs of the individual: through social education, it must be concerned with enabling the individual to develop *his/her own vision* of the future and the social skills needed to play an active role in society. If youth work is to have any impact on the problems facing young people today then it must concern *itself with social change*. This implies that youth work must have a key role both in enabling young people *to analyse society and in motivating and helping them to develop the skills and capacities to become involved in effecting change.* (Department of Labour, 1984: 116, emphasis added)

Grounding youth work activities in exciting the passions, interests, concerns and views of young people as they experience or express them, may serve as an important corrective to the excesses of neoliberalised government across society. We are especially critical of the 'economization of freedom' that characterises contemporary neoliberalisation, and its marketised, competitive and prescriptive 'formulation of winners and losers' (Brown, 2015: 41). Furthermore, a reassertion of the principle of voluntary participation in all youth work activities, such as is discussed by Bernard Davies (2015) and De St Croix (2017), could empower young people to know that they have the freedom to engage with or disengage from processes and projects according to their own judgements. It permits 'a personally committed participation' on young people's part rather than a merely 'compliant attendance' (Davies[i], 2015:102), thus rebalancing the power between young people and workers, mitigating the more controlling and objectivising aspects of government. This is a more democratic vision of 'freedom' than that which informs neoliberal conceptions of consumer choice or individualised market freedom.

Against the prevailing currents of our times, we contend that a rejection of rigidifying agendas and prescribed outcomes, allows young people to imagine and explore ways of thinking, being and acting at a pace of their own making. However, we are concerned that youth work in Ireland is being steered away from such open-ended possibilities as policy priorities are increasingly directed by what 'the evidence' permits.

Evidence Based / Informed Practice and Youth Work: Some Challenges

Philanthropic funding of youth, community and voluntary sector activity has been less 'developed', in Ireland than in other EU contexts or in the USA. Perhaps unsurprisingly, during Ireland's era of austerity Government began to actively proselytise the benefits of enhanced

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private sector, philanthropic and corporate funding for these fields (Forum on Philanthropy and Fundraising, 2012)[58]. Of those philanthropic organisations present in Ireland, The Atlantic Philanthropies became a particularly influential policy actor during the 2000s. One aspect of its work and mission was to provide grant aid to children and youth programmes[59], funding which was contingent on the delivery of evidence of outcomes and effectiveness. Arguably, its example has provided an additional impetus for Government to enthusiastically pursue the evidence 'agenda'. Consequently, we have witnessed the emergence of an expansive service infrastructure[60], offering the required supports to help organisations deliver desired outcomes for children and young people. A prominent actor within this infrastructure is The Centre for Effective Services (CES), which was founded in 2008. As already noted, coinciding with the global and national economic collapse, preoccupations with effectiveness and value for money in the public and welfare fields were becoming live political issues at that time, and they would intensify as austerity became entrenched. Since 2008 the CES has worked as 'an implementation partner with Government on a number of policy initiatives' (The CES, n.d.). Its website outlines its commitment to 'working closely with the Youth Affairs Unit to improve the quality of, and outcomes from, youth work through the use of evidence informed practice' and how it 'collaborates closely with national and local organisations in the sector to support them to develop their practice'(The CES, n.da). The organisation's emphasis on practical outcomes, is reflected in its self-identification as a 'think and do tank', rather than a think tank, that provides 'relevant and usable evidence' to policy makers, service commissioners, providers and practitioners (The CES, n.d.). From a governmentality perspective such emphases on practices are critical: governmental actors seek to mobilise conduct in ways that are constructed as productive for and of benefit to society (Rose, 2000). In that regard, the CES has been highly productive and has become an important source of expertise, evidence and documentation for the Irish youth work sector. Among its achievements to date are; the route map and training infrastructure for the implementation of the National Quality Standards

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[58] A Government established 'Forum on Philanthropy and Fundraising' (2012: 10) asserted that the 'not-for-profit sector itself also needs to adapt to new economic realities, and to operate more efficiently and more innovatively. The sector is expected to become better at targeting a more diverse range of supports, including partnerships within the corporate sector'.

[59] In the Republic of Ireland, between 1987 and 2015, The Atlantic Philanthropies provided grants in the region of $1.2billion to organisations working in range of social and human rights fields, including those active on issues impacting LGBT people, children and young people, older people, migrants and refugees, among others (The Atlantic Philanthropies, 2017).

[60] It includes The Centre for Effective Services, The Child and Family Research Centre at National University of Ireland Galway, Foróige Best Practice Unit, the Prevention and Early Intervention Network.

Framework (NQSF) in youth work[61]; the literature review which contributed to a value for money and policy review of youth programmes commissioned by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) in 2015; an 'evidence review' to inform the 2015 National Youth Strategy; and the CES's subsequent involvement in the strategy's implementation (The CES, n.da). Indeed the CES has become central to the designation of 'what works', in a range of social fields including, early years provision, community development and social work. In 2015 it established a new phase of work with the Northern Irish and Irish governments in the area of policy implementation and 'public service reform' (The CES, n.d.), facilitated by funding from Government and Atlantic Philanthropies.

The expectation that policy and practice must/will be evidence based has become hegemonic in Ireland. In 2016 Minster for Children and Youth Affairs, Katherine Zappone, asserted that, 'I am completely convinced that evidence has to be at the heart of policy; and that we should not shy away from changing policy where evidence shows that what we're doing is not working' (Zappone, 2016). While such commitments are ostensibly reasonable and commonsensical, they do not reflect the growing uncertainty about the plausibility, merit or practicability of the selected 'evidence'. Critics of evidence based practice internationally, many of whom regard it as a product of New Managerialism, argue that it is in effect a 'slogan' (Hammersley, 2013: 15) or 'a truism' (Davies[ii], 2003: 98), the rhetorical effect of which is to discredit oppositional or dissenting approaches. Indeed, we contend, that the very claim that youth work can or should be evidence based runs counter to the values that render work with young people *youth work*. It assumes that there is universal agreement about the ends youth work is expected to achieve and that it is appropriate to peg practice to prescribed ends in the first instance. The desire to designate 'what works' privileges a technocratic view of practice (Biesta, 2007, 2010; also Hammersley, 2013) that belies its cultural, relational, contested and even political potential.

Brownyn Davies (2005) raises foundational questions about what is selected to provide the evaluative base for evidence, how it is selected, who selects it, and how it is then translated into practical ways of working with deliverable outcomes. Interestingly, in Ireland when the 'objective' evidence base - such as randomised control trials, systematic reviews or quasi-experimental study results - has been found wanting, the language deployed has been softened to 'evidence-informed practice' or an 'evidence matrix' (Bamber, *et. al.*, 2012; Dickson *et. al.*,

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[61] The NQSF was introduced in 2010 by the Office for the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, and it is a condition for funding that all youth work organisations participate in this quality assurance process.

2013: 1). While Biesta (2012) concedes that the term 'evidence informed' is marginally more modest in its claims-making, evoking some recognition of the challenges inherent in designating 'what works', it is still encumbered by flawed assumptions as to what evidence is, what it can do and what it can achieve. Clearly, organisations such as the CES are not unaware of the limits and contradictions associated with the pursuit of evidence or a 'gold standard' in a practice field 'that is essentially fluid and responsive' (Bamber, 2013:11), but it still holds to the plausibility of 'a more nuanced evidence- informed approach' that is 'based on the integration of experience, judgement and expertise with the best available external evidence from systematic research' (Bamber, 2013: 13). While, potentially, there is some accommodation of practice wisdom and dilution of claims-making in the discursive shift from 'evidence based' to 'evidence informed', we maintain that the primary rationale remains the same; ensuring that youth work delivers predictable results in line with competitive, and increasingly neoliberalised, modes of resource allocation and top-down instrumentalist conceptions of accountability. For example, the CES posits that the roll-out of the National Quality Standards Framework in youth work reflects a concern 'to improve rather than prove practice', but additionally that it will 'help to substantiate the work at a time when the need to defend youth work has never been greater' and where an obligation 'to maximise the impact of the resources to hand' looms large (Bamber, et. al., 2012: 54).

Furthermore, by making 'evidence' accessible and usable through the development of practice supports and resources, the CES plays a significant part in familiarising and engaging practitioners with the governmental technologies associated with an 'improved' youth work practice. John Bamber (2011), project specialist with the CES, identifies as someone whose own biography stands as testament to the value of youth work. Nonetheless, he acknowledges that 'impact stories' like his own regarding youth work's successes, however powerful they might be, are just not sufficient for a contemporary reality where results of a different kind must be demonstrated.

Any governmental programme can only work if key actors adopt their required roles, responsibilities and behaviours. Across the social field a rich panoply of 'governmental technologies' (Rose and Miller, 1992: 175) or, more specifically, 'technologies of performance' (Dean, 2010: 197) are deployed to inform, convince and up-skill practitioners. 'Technologies of performance', are projected, implicitly but often explicitly, as 'techniques of restoring trust' in the practices of 'service providers, public services and professionals' (Dean, 2010: 197). In youth work, they include, in-service training, conferences, symposia, user friendly practice advice, audit and evaluative tools as well as workers' evidence informed

success stories[62]. Together these technologies help to activate the self-governing conduct of freely choosing subjects, i.e. youth work practitioners. However, we are concerned that the evidence industry which promotes their deployment in the social policy and practice fields does not comprehensively engage with thorny questions of value conflicts, political economy, power, freedom or democracy that these technologies engender.

During Ireland's period of austerity, and coinciding with the establishment of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs [2011], policy making in youth work intensified. In keeping with a governmentality perspective, the following sections open up this expanding policy domain to interrogation. As we look more closely at how the above developments are shaping and taking shape in Ireland, we do not want to mis-represent the relevant policy discourses and documents as suddenly, uniquely or coherently neoliberal. Nor do we want to exaggerate their 'force and scope' (Youdell and McGimpsey, 2015: 116). Rather, we wish to use youth work policy as the terrain for analysing (and critiquing) how neoliberalised governmentalities have become more familiar and more compelling over time. A governmentality lens allows us to identify some of the ways through which recent policy discourses, and allied processes and practices of subjectification, seek to conduct young people towards desired behaviours and ways of being, *and crucially*, how they simultaneously seek to re-position and discipline the services and workers that are engaging with young people.

Youth Work Policy-Making in Ireland: Setting the Scene

Prior to the 1960s the voluntary youth work sector (and its practice) was largely ignored by the state to meet the needs of young people as it saw fit, albeit with limited financial resources. By the 1990s youth work was increasingly aligned with governmental objectives, as evidenced by state funding arrangements which bifurcated youth work practice provision into universal and special projects, as outlined in the beginning of this paper. It is this alignment, consolidated and advanced from the 2000s onwards, which as we argue, bears significant hallmarks of neoliberal processes of governmentality at work. For example, it was not until the introduction of the Youth Work Act 2001 (which provided for the creation of an assessor of youth work post and the appointment of statutory youth work officers at regional level) and the introduction of the National Quality Standards Framework in 2011, that the state had at its disposal the required

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[62] On September 20, 2016 Youth Work Ireland in conjunction with the Irish Department of Children and Youth Affairs hosted a youth work symposium on generating evidence from practice. Also in 2016, the NYCI launched its '8 Steps to inclusive Youth Work' toolkit for organisations. In publicising the resource, organisations were assured that it would help them to report within the NQSF, to write their continuous improvement pans and to develop a logic model towards realising the outcomes of the National Youth Strategy.

infrastructure to assess the value of youth work and to propagate outcomes driven evidence based youth work.

The Youth Work Act of 2001 laid out the functions and responsibilities of key policy actors with respect to the resourcing, oversight and delivery of youth work in Ireland. Significantly those actors would come from both the state and non-state sectors, and include; the relevant government Minister; Vocational Educational Committees (later reconstituted as Education and Training Boards/ ETBs) responsible for co-ordinating and assisting local provision; a specially established National Youth Work Advisory Committee, the membership of which comprised a mix of Government appointees and nominees from the voluntary youth sector; and the National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI)[63], which was designated as *the* Prescribed National Representative Youth Work Organisation (Government of Ireland, 2001).

Such developments reflected and accentuated the focus on 'partnership' that had become dominant within the Irish policy making sphere from the 1990s onwards. 'Partnership' was simultaneously a discourse and practice, serving as means and end for achieving consensus among diverse interest groups: a range of consultative processes and forums, operating at local and national levels, were created to respond to issues such as drug misuse, homelessness, unemployment and social exclusion. The National Youth Council of Ireland sought and secured Social Partner status in 1996 when it became a constituent member of the newly established Community and Voluntary Pillar that, along with the pre-existing Trade Union, Farming and Business/Employer Pillars, negotiated successive national agreements. While there has been much debate about the inclusivity of social partnership or the extent to which it effaced hierarchy and power relations (Larragy, 2014; McMahon, 2009), and even though the partnership model became a casualty of Ireland's economic collapse, it should be acknowledged that policy making processes and policy content in fields such as youth work have not been coercively imposed or unilaterally determined by the state. Indeed, as McMahon (2009; 112) has commented, key voices within the voluntary youth sector actively pursued greater 'state intervention in youth work', the ultimate objective being 'to establish a legal and statutory footing for youth work provision', thus gaining a status commensurate with that of comparable social services. The achievement of externally sanctioned recognition, legitimacy and secure resources were the sector's anticipated gains, as it welcomed the state's growing

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[63] The National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI identifies itself as a 'membership-led umbrella organisation that represents and supports the interests of voluntary youth organisations' (NYCI, n.d.: http://www.youth.ie/about_nyci)

interest in and influence over youth work. A range of individual, business, academic and organisational actors from the youth work landscape positioned themselves in the consensual spaces created by Government in order to shape policy priorities and transmit them into the heretofore more autonomous domains of practice.

Accordingly, extensive consultations and engagement with key stakeholders have characterised the processes of development and implementation of the policies featured in this paper. For example, the National Quality Standards Framework, which is discussed in the following section, saw the creation of a working group and an implementation group comprised of central and intermediate state agents (Government Department Officials, youth officers employed by statutory organisations) as well as academics and personnel from youth organisations. A number of youth organisations contributed to the Framework's pilot phase. Similarly the National Youth Strategy was developed out of a collaborative endeavour that involved a wide range of individuals, business and civil society stakeholders, including young people. As Pyykkönen (2015; 24) explains, 'an important part of the recent development of the governmentalization of the state is the global trend where CSOs (Civil Society Organisations) and private actors become partners of administration and service production, and partially submit their actions to the control of public administration, market rules, and legislations. Similarly, we argue that the creation a multi-actor and plurivocal policy sphere does not diminish the operation or reach of government in Irish youth work, but rather that civil society organisation participation within that policy sphere ensures the reconstitution and more widespread embedding of governmental rationalities and practices.

Applying a Governmentality Approach to the Recent Policy Making Infrastructure
National Quality Standards Framework for Youth Work (NQSF)
Prepared in 2010 and introduced in 2011, the National Quality Standards Framework for Youth Work (OMCYA, 2010) was developed by the then Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, predecessor to the Department of Children and Youth Affairs. In its aftermath, participation in this quality assurance process became a condition for receipt of DCYA funding for all youth work services and programmes. The Framework sought to establish the standards that would determine 'quality youth work' practice, provide 'an evidence base' for youth work, enable 'whole-organisational assessment' and ensure effective use of state funding within the sector (OMCYA, 2010: 2). From the outset, it was clear that the Framework emerged out of a perceived need for youth work both to prove – through the normalisation of common discourses about what youth work is - *and* improve itself - through the on-going and cost-effective

development of practice to respond to young people's developmental needs. Employing a governmentality analytic enables us to appreciate how the Framework and its accompanying rationalities and techniques served to make youth work more knowable and more governable. This was to be accomplished through the standardisation of practice, the promotion of a shared lexis for talking about practice and the obligation put on services to prove their worth in terms of defined outcomes (see OMCYA, 2010: 5-17). A panoply of resources were developed to support implementation of the Framework and a Task Group was appointed to provide training and supports to effect its roll-out. The Framework required organisations to show evidence of their outcomes-directed planning and to gather data that would demonstrate outcome attainment (OMCYA, 2010). The National Youth Council of Ireland in co-operation with Youthnet (a strategic network of voluntary organisations in Northern Ireland) convened a conference in 2011 entitled 'How Do We Know its Working?' which provided an opportunity for organisations and youth workers across the island of Ireland to become much better acquainted with the selected toolkits for impact measurement. Consequently, we identify the introduction of the NQSF, following the Youth Work Act 2001, as the next most important step towards making the discourses of outcomes and evidence central to Irish youth work policy and practice.

Youth Work: A Systematic Map of the Research Literature
To compile a systematic map of studies of youth work, research was commissioned by the CES on behalf of the DCYA and 'outsourced' to the Evidence for Policy and Practice Information and Co-ordinating Centre in London in 2013. The starting point for the subsequent report was an acknowledgement that the literature offering 'high-end' research evidence about youth work impacts is very limited, due to the lack of control groups in studies of youth work activities, and that most of what is available focuses on youth work in the USA (Dickson, et. al., 2013: 46). Furthermore, the search for relevant research was limited to English language databases and studies. So, while its authors were very candid about the significant scientific limitations of the map produced – e.g. the review was not presented as a systematic review, such as typically benchmarks evidence based policy making in medicine - and they describe it instead as 'a systematic map of research evidence', they nonetheless claim it is 'a tool for policy-makers, practitioners and academics interested in interrogating and developing the evidence base further' (Dickson, et. al., 2013: 6).

Responses to the map were mixed. Some viewed it as 'a resource that has the potential to positively improve the content, the process and the evaluation of youth work practice' (Ryan

Culleton, 2013: 22) while others questioned 'the un-youth work like' spaces - 'golf course, farm, school, clinic, university and wilderness camp!' - featured in some of the studies identified as providing 'evidence' of good practice (McVeigh, 2013: 23). Indeed the relevance of what were predominantly US studies as comparators for Ireland's distinctively different policy and practice context was also queried (McVeigh, 2013; Ryan Culleton, 2013). Given that the youth sector was then experiencing significant budget cuts, the lack of analysis within the map of the contingent relationship between funding and outcomes, generated some additional commentary. For example, Hayes (2013: 24) highlighted how a preponderance of studies featured in the map constructed youth work as primarily relating to 'personal and social development', as opposed to 'social change', and he wondered how that classification might be 'influenced' by 'where funding is allocated'. For us, this raises important questions about the potentially self-reproducing character of the policy/evidence relationship, whereby the discipline of funding arrangements orients youth work towards particular ends, which then serve as a template and justification for the further use of state funds. Consequently, such research potentially delimits the 'field of visibility' (Dean, 2010: 41) for the government of Irish youth work, because it 'illuminates and defines certain' practices as legitimate or valid while through its 'shadows and darkness it obscures others'.

The Value for Money and Policy Review of Youth Programmes (VFMPR)

In 2012, the DCYA subjected a selection of youth programmes to the Department's first value for money and policy review (VFMPR), a selection justified with reference to the requirements of the Public Spending Code and by those programmes' receipt of comparatively higher levels of state expenditure (DCYA, 2014: 16). The VFMPR was positioned as part of the DCYA's agenda to 'rationalise, reform and improve programmes' (2014: 16) and its steering committee was comprised of persons whose expertise lay in finance, economic evaluation, auditing, and governance. Even prior to the VFMPR and in the context of austerity's roll-out, the National Youth Council of Ireland commissioned independent economic consultancy INDECON to conduct an assessment of the economic value of youth work in Irish society. Published in 2012, the report (Indecon, 2012) concluded that every euro Government invested in youth work ultimately saved €2.22. Senator Jillian van Turnhout, speaking at its launch, noted that the exercise provided the first 'hard evidence' that youth work was 'value for money' (NYCI, 2012). Arguably, the dominance of economistic rationalities and quantitative measures of value propels youth organisations into cycles of 'defensive instrumentalism' (Belfiore, 2012), whereby they too deploy similar rationalities and discourses to legitimise their work and to

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obviate external reviews, which can prove burdensome and have little resonance with youth work practice.

The text of the VFMPR (DYCA, 2014: 18) explicitly focuses on specific 'programmes... and not the effectiveness and efficiency of "youth work", which is essentially a professional/policy consideration': the rationale behind this distinction being that a programmatic as opposed to professional focus 'permits examination of efficiencies and effectiveness in securing objectives *irrespective of the particular philosophical, practice and professional make-up of any one organisation*' (DYCA, 2014: 18, emphasis added). We contend that this emphasis on programmes facilitates the channelling of funding into the specialist 'problem solving' or 'liquid' engagements designed to produce quick results (Batsleer, 2010). For example, while austerity starved generic youth work services of important resources, an additional €2.8million extended youth justice/crime reduction work into 10 new geographical areas. Additionally, the bifurcation of mainstream and special/targeted provision and the associated privileging of funding for 'programmes' within the targeted provision framework expedite the streamlining and comparison of outcomes, particularly when the prescribed grounds for comparison are unencumbered by the political and ethical baggage of youth organisations themselves. In keeping with UK developments (McGimpsey, 2017), Governments' preference for 'programmes for young people' rather than a more expansively understood youth work practice, is becoming ever more discernible in Ireland.

The VFMPR's concern with specific programmes also permits consideration as to whether alternative market or societal actors, i.e. other than voluntary youth organisations, can deliver what Davies (2015: 96) dubs 'cherry picked' or 'derooted' practice. It opens up the possibility that the DYCA might reposition itself as purchaser in the market of 'off the peg' programmes for young people (DYCA, 2014: 122). Although ruled out in the short term, this option is retained for longer term consideration if the intermediate statutory governance structures (Education and Training Boards - ETBs) with responsibility for youth services are perceived to be underperforming (DCYA, 2014: 124). Indeed VFMPR outlines significant changes to how ETB Youth Officers, as mediating actors, might enact their obligations to the DYCA. As 'local effort is aligned with policy objectives and programme outcomes are set centrally', Youth Officers must become increasingly vigilant in terms of their 'sign-off responsibilities' and hierarchy is accentuated as 'the relationship between the DCYA and ETB Youth Officer' becomes one of 'principal and agent', while the youth officer's role shifts from '*development* to implementing DCYA policy' (DCYA, 2014: 124, emphasis in original). The

threat of future outsourcing functions as a disciplinary tool to ensure compliance, upwards accountability and the seamless delivery of targets.

The document makes frequent allusions to positive outcomes for young people but it is clear that those outcomes must reflect and be aligned with the DYCA's own strategic priorities. There is a consequent distancing, diminishing and essentialising of young people, who are constructed as objects of intervention or persons with problems requiring resolution. The VFMPR notes how the 'needs domains covered by the schemes are wide, ranging from preventing drugs misuse to reducing anti-social behaviour to improving uptake of training and employment opportunities' (DCYA, 2014: 33). But clearly, this all too predictable reckoning of what young people need is remarkable for its narrowness rather than its breadth. There is scant recognition that young people may participate in youth work to form positive relationships with adults who respect them and relate to them as persons of equal standing, rather it is assumed that young people participate in youth work so that their attitudes, behaviours and ways of being can be redirected towards more productive ends. If 'soft outcomes' such as relationship building do emerge, they are ultimately to be seen in instrumental terms, whereby young people and workers can '"co-produce" outcomes that can improve the chances of … higher level impacts occurring' (DCYA, 2014: 106). Resistance to programme interventions is not to be accommodated as an act of self-determination by young people, but to be addressed and overcome by the administration of psychological treatments, i.e. motivational interviewing (DCYA, 2014: 162). Resistant young people are thus constructed as unable 'to exercise their own autonomy or act in their own best interests' (Dean, 2002: 47) and in line with neoliberal governmentalities, youth workers are tasked with deploying techniques of the self that incite young people to work on themselves and look for 'solutions' within themselves rather than within their wider socio-economic or political contexts. Notably, the first significant increase in state funding post-austerity, a €5.5million increase to the overall budget for youth services in 2017, came with the condition that services use the additional resources to support early school leavers and other groups of young people identified as disadvantaged to access employment (DCYA, n.d.). We thus see an accelerating policy trend that requires youth workers to engage in 'the conduct of conduct' (Murray Li, 2007: 275) while making funding contingent on solving young people's 'problems'.

The 'science' underpinning the VFMPR is undoubtedly positivist, signalling a shift away from what might be considered a 'softer' evidence informed approach towards a more hardwired evidence based one. The review acknowledges that it was from the outset hampered by 'poor and unreliable data' because randomized controlled trials (RCTs) of programmatic

interventions have not been conducted and, so, sufficient amounts of the required data were not gathered in the required way to provide an evidence base to demonstrate programme effectiveness (DCYA, 2014: 4). The triangulation of the kinds of data drawn on for the review is presented as second rate and summarily dismissed as not providing adequate evidence to prove positive impact. Overall, the VFMPR concludes that too many factors hampered the reviewers' determination as to whether or not programmes offered value for money and that this is unsatisfactory given the significant investment (€128 million) in the programmes over the period of examination (DCYA, 2014: 11). Comparable reviews of youth work in other countries have reached similar conclusions (Fouché et. al., 2010; MacKie and McGinley, 2012). Interestingly, the VFMPR problematises high levels of local discretion, the lack of uniform codification, weaknesses in data quality and problems with programme governance structures (DCYA, 2014: 23) as key factors contributing to the evidence shortfall. Therefore, it proposes additional limits on the discretion to be exercised by programme implementers, greater standardisation in programme data gathering techniques and an intensification of top-down, centralised governance of programmes.

The VFMPR provides the first real indicator that youth work is regarded as having come of age in an evidence based climate where it should now be expected to prove rather than merely improve its practice into the future. Aside from privileging centralisation, control and standardisation, the review elicits other troubling political questions. It fails to fully acknowledge that the financial outlay on the specified youth programmes is modest relative to other public spending and that those monies are primarily spent on work with young people already disadvantaged by structural inequalities. The review does note that in the three years covered, funding provided for youth work programmes consistently fell, dropping by 16% between 2010 and 2012 (DCYA, 2014: 20), with staff salaries decreasing and participant numbers increasing simultaneously. It seems extraordinary, then, that there are no correlations made between what can/should be expected in terms of outputs and outcomes in a context of severe under-resourcing. Indeed, as Dunne et al. (2014) observe, across EU member states there has been an increased demand for youth work, along with a greater emphasis on measurable outcomes, while at the very same time there has been a decline in upfront finance and support for more traditional forms of youth work, presumably the very forms of youth work that generated the demand in the first instance. In an article with the instructive title, 'There's no getting away from evidence in the youth work field', project specialist with the CES, John Bamber (2013) argues that it is precisely because youth work attracts so little financial support relative to other spending areas, like education, health and welfare, that the

impacts of resources must be maximised. In Ireland's climate of evidence gathering and performance monitoring, it appears that those who are comparatively disadvantaged in terms of resources must both do more and demonstrate more if they are to be entrusted with future public subsidy.

Better Outcomes Brighter Futures (BOBF) and the National Youth Strategy (NYS)

The DYCA's wholehearted embrace of the practices and discourses of evidence and outcomes is further illustrated by the content of its own policy framework (2014-2020). Entitled 'Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures', it sets out five key national outcomes to be achieved in the period 2014 to 2020 for children and young people up to the age of 24 years, and which will in turn 'transform the effectiveness of existing policies, services and resources' (DCYA, 2014a: 7). Continuing the VFMR's concern with the need to prove rather than improve performance, it stridently asserts that 'Government investment in children will be more outcomes-driven and informed by national and international evidence on the effectiveness of expenditure', and that 'Resource allocation within services will be based on evidence of both need and effectiveness, and services that are not working will be decommissioned' (DCYA, 2014a: xv). A set of indicators aligned to the five outcomes is being developed by the DCYA in conjunction with the CES, for the purpose of tracking their progress (DCYA, 2016). Thus, as the BOBF policy framework makes clear, and as reiterated in the DCYA's 'Statement of Strategy 2016 -2019', the new performativity techniques that are shaping the government of youth work, will generate real material consequences for youth projects and workers (DCYA, n.d.).

The National Youth Strategy 2015-2020 is directly informed by 'Better Outcomes Brighter Futures'. It is not a strategy for youth work per se, rather it incorporates youth work into a wider governmental strategy for young people in Ireland. National strategies provide a mechanism for countries to align youth policies with European and international standards (Denstad, 2009). Developed out of the collaborative process that was referenced earlier and led by project team of six, including both a CES project specialist and graduate intern, the Irish strategy is 'evidence informed and outcomes focused' (DCYA, 2015: 2)[64]. The Strategy's objectives relate directly to BOBF's five national outcomes areas and its approach is cross-sectoral in that all interests/stakeholders are expected to work together in a co-ordinated way to achieve these outcomes. Indeed in 2014, the Children's Services Committees, drivers of

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[64] In its foreword the incumbent Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, James Reilly, contended that 'Improving outcomes for young people is everyone's business' (DCYA, 2015: v).

local statutory and voluntary interagency work in the provision of services to children and families, were reconstituted as Children and Young People's Services Committees with a remit to co-ordinate all local statutory and voluntary services geared towards positive outcomes for those ranging from infancy up to 24 years of age; subsuming youth work in the process. Such 'multi-professional service architectures' (Bradford and Cullen, 2014, 102), along with a wider climate of policy submissiveness, further obscure value-led, relational youth work practice. Government invokes a variety of strategies for 'the instrumentalization of personal allegiances and active responsibilities' (Rose, 1996: 332). In 2015 the National Youth Council of Ireland's annual conference, 'Playing our Part', focused on how the youth sector would contribute to the Strategy. Promoting the conference, the NYCI (2015) urged youth work organisations to consider 'What can you contribute to its [the Strategy's] implementation and how can you drive it forward?'. This deployment of language and action verbs was revealing in terms of the Council's productive use of its own power and status to further legitimise the Strategy and to galvanise support for it among member organisations. The Strategy was constructed as unproblematic[65] for NYCI members, who were exhorted to make their practice amenable to the achievement of a set of desired outcomes (NYCI, 2015a).

The impacts of austerity, along with the policy developments explored above, undoubtedly underline the youth sector's dependency on (and vulnerability to reversals in) state funding. Perhaps unsurprisingly, this has fuelled a growing interest in 'alternative' sources of finance. For example, the NYCI's annual conference 2016, 'Talking Cents', looked at how the sector might secure private and philanthropic investment in addition to state funding and it launched the 'Youth Work Changes Lives' fundraising campaign. Our governmentality perspective, however, suggests that 'alternative' funding may bring new freedoms *and* new restrictions. It calls for critical attention to the range of actors, both state and non-state, who may seek to govern youth work practice into the future. Furthermore, we are concerned that a turn to philanthropy further reinforces a neo-liberalised conception of the state; as smaller but more regulatory, as rolled-back but more disciplinary, as the arbiter but not the target of practice.

Concluding Discussion

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[65] Rather, the NYCI Director lamented that the strategy was 'not as far reaching or as ambitious' as the Council would like (NYCI, 2015a).

By focusing on a policy infrastructure that both claims to provide evidence about and that seeks to conduct youth work in Ireland, this paper draws particular attention to the ways by which the state and influential policy partners potentially direct, contain, measure, judge and (in)validate practice outcomes. With governmentality approaches, there is a risk that power becomes conceptualised as such a totalising or inescapable phenomenon that all hope of resistance is precluded (Death, 2010), but Foucault (2009: 200-202) did in fact introduce the concept of 'counter-conduct' to acknowledge and capture instances of 'resistance, refusal or revolt' that work against attempts to conduct our conduct. As Murray Li (2007, 280) remarks, while 'the will to govern is expansive, there is nothing determinate about the outcomes'. Targeted individuals, be they young people or youth workers, may ignore, oppose or re-negotiate the identities they are expected to adopt and they may, in their everyday encounters in practice settings, conduct themselves in ways that challenge or upend neoliberal governmentalities. Therefore, resistances to the operations of governmental power must be understood as fluid, situationally specific and often unpredictable. While we do not pretend that resistance is easy or cost-neutral for those expressing it, in a world where we are continually exhorted to accept that 'there is no alternative', we want to emphasise that alternative ways of being are possible *and* necessary.

As we have acknowledged, because policy discourses provide the key empirical evidence for governmentality theorists, there may be an associated lack of attention to if, how, and to what degree governmental intentions are realized on the ground. Consequently, writers such as Kim Mckee (2009, p. 476) propose a reconfigured 'realist' governmentality approach to explore how governmental effects play out in practice. Others have undertaken ethnographic studies that show how efforts to govern are best conceptualized as partial and shifting (Brady, 2014; Murray Li, 2007, 2007a), and there are calls for more micro-level research to explore organizations' aspirations and activities for critical alternatives (Milbourne and Cushman, 2015). Irish research has shown that even within the punitive contexts of austerity or contingent funding, total compliance with policies and procedures cannot be guaranteed at local level. Both Bowden's (2006) and Swirak's (2013) research on Garda Youth Diversion Projects (GYDPs) in Ireland reveal organizations' and workers' differentiated levels and types of acquiescence or resistance to the policy discourses
governing these projects and to prescribed ways of working with young people.

We are concerned that open-ended and deliberative conceptions of youth work are endangered by the programmatic and evidence-based turn in policy making; that youthwork policy's responsiveness to young people's own experiences or worldviews will be sidelined in

the interests of economizing and disciplining their conduct. For example, Bowden (2006) found evidence in one of his two case studies that the youth work being practiced had hybridized and adapted to a more punitive social order, while Swirak was unequivocal that her research pointed to a discernible model of' 'youth justice work' as distinct from youth work, having hold in this practice field from 2009 onwards (Swirak, 2013).

In contrast to youth 'justice' work, we take inspiration from practice such as that developed by Rialto Youth Project in Dublin. Drawing on a vibrant tradition of community arts, its imitative *Policing Dialogues* involved a collaboration between young people and artist Fiona Whelan in the *What's the Story? Collective*. Over a three year period, the Collective engaged in processes of reflection, critique and analysis that contributed to a multi-media interrogation of their everyday experiences of oppressive power, culminating in a residency in Dublin's LAB Arts Space in 2010 (What's the Story? Collective, n.d.). One element of the process was an encounter that took place in the Irish Museum of Modern Art in 2009, at an event called *The Day in Question*. Newly recruited Gardaí (police) were invited to read aloud from - *and thus really listen to* - young people's anonymised narrative accounts of arbitrary police power. In the words of artist Fiona Whelan (Whelan and Ryan, 2016; n.p.), 'Inviting those holding state power into a relational space where they would listen to young people was unique, particularly when compared to existing state-sponsored programs between young people and Gardaí, which are largely based on the assumption that young people from so-called "disadvantaged" areas harbor the potential to become future criminals and deviants'. While it is not possible to do justice in this article to the analytical depth and creative scope of *Policing Dialogues*, we want to acknowledge it as *youth work;* as a form of practice that sought to invert, destabilise and transcend dominant expressions of governmental power and their problematisations of young people's conduct.

Notwithstanding our recognition of the dialectical relationship between power and resistance, we argue that state funded youth work in Ireland is undergoing depreciation, distortion and a neoliberal re-imagining. A governmentality lens has been employed to highlight the enormous challenges involved in resisting the expansive power of evidence based/informed youth work. But as Bronwyn Davies (ii, 2005) contends, the first step in resisting is to appreciate the constitutive power of that which is being resisted. Based on our review of Irish policy, we cannot trust that youth work is understood and promoted as a universal, generic and progressive practice. Instead we must critically assess who is engaged in what kinds of youth work for the realisation of what particular governmental ambitions and with what material effects.

Given the thrust of governmental rationalities and evidence in Ireland, if youth work is to be accorded or to claim the status of a 'free practice', such as is sought by MacKie and McGinley (2012: 7), then a deliberate shift away from its current operating framework is essential. If this seems too scary a prospect, we should at least affirm practice that occurs outside or in spite of the dominant outcomes framework, practice that may inspire re-imaginings of youth work for a post-neoliberal, post-evidence based practice world. Accordingly, we must continuously resist what Bronwyn Davies (ii, 2005: 6) calls the 'relanguaging' of what youth work and research were, are and should be. These of us in higher education might engage with a 'policy relevant counter-science' (Lather, 2004: 285) that challenges the workings and implications of narrow scientism and associated technocracies of research, intervention, surveillance and audit. We can equip ourselves and our students with a 'doubled gaze' (Davies[ii], 2005; 13) that recognises youth work is a field of possibilities that is infinitely wider in scope than that being circumscribed through the current exercise of power and knowledge.

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Part 9: Ethical Considerations

Declaration: 142.4 Regulations for Phd by Prior Output

Ethical Considerations

This body of work was published between 2008 and 2018, during which time I, Rosemary (Rosie) R. Meade was an employee of University College Cork, Ireland. The research undertaken, while detailed and original, did not involve the direct participation of other human subjects. Therefore, it was not subject to Ethical Approval by University College Cork. No specific funding or grants were received to support the research, and consequently it was not necessary to negotiate relationships with funding or partner agencies. The research is based on analysis of publicly available texts and documents, ranging from newspaper articles, policy documents, ministerial statements and Dáil debates, speeches, protest placards, policy submissions, position papers and web postings by activist groups and NGOs.

The following ethical considerations informed the research, writing and submission for publication of the ten research outputs.

1. **Promotion of positive collaborative working relationships.**

   Three of the publications were researched and written in collaboration with colleagues. Care was taken to ensure that these collaborations were based on: mutual respect for the learning, commitment, and insight of all parties; equality in the sharing of responsibilities and in terms of credit for work done; and transparency in our dealings with each other as we negotiated research milestones. All aspects of the preparation, writing and publication process were discussed and agreed by collaborators along the way.

2. **Integrity**

   In line with the Sociological Association of Ireland's (n.d.: 1)[66] emphasis on the importance of 'integrity' in all professional and research activities, care was taken to ensure that the research did not propagate 'false, misleading, or deceptive' information

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[66] Sociological Association of Ireland (n.d.) Ethical Guidelines Sociological Association of Ireland, https://www.sociology.ie/uploads/4/2/5/2/42525367/sai_ethical_guidelines.pdf [retrieved 01/05/2018]

either deliberately or through omission. Information/data sources are attributed and traceable, and care has been taken to ensure that information sources are accurately represented within the various outputs.

3. **Social responsibility**

I am conscious of my responsibility to produce research that is trustworthy, academically robust, and socially engaged. All ten publications are now publicly available in book, journal, or online formats for purposes of review, commentary, or critique. All of the articles are informed by commitments to social justice, equality and informed social analysis. The critical perspective, which has informed the writing and research of the ten outputs, is set out in Part 3 of the Covering Document.

4. **Recognition of the limitations of the research**

As an author I am confident that the body of work makes an original and coherent contribution to the chosen field of research. However, I am also cognisant of its epistemological limitations; the potential for alternative or supplementary approaches to research on related issues and subjects. The outputs avoid making exaggerated claims about their scope and depth.